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Personal Religious Life

IN

The Ministry

AND IN

Ministering Women

BY

Reference
F. D. HUNTINGTON, S.T.D., LL.D., L.H.D.

¹⁴ Bishop of Central New York

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Three of these addresses, delivered under the title of "The Relation of the Inward Life of the Clergy to their Public Offices," were put to print in compliance with a request of fifty-five members of the Senior and Middle Classes of the General Theological Seminary several years ago.



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I.

SINGLENESS OF HEART.

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WE have no time for anything prefatory. The essential nature of the Kingdom of God among men, the drift of our recent Church-life, and such personal experience as I have had, establish in my mind the conviction that the work to which you are so near, and are drawing nearer every day, needs nothing so much as that it be made deeper work; that we need to deepen it more than we need to extend it, to diversify it, or to enlighten it with mere intellectual light, and that we cannot deepen it much in others unless we deepen it first in ourselves.

The Ministry of Christ can never fulfil its calling so long as it takes its rule of living from the standards of the prevailing social Christianity. There are two orders of life, the order of nature and the order of grace. Whether the laws of the natural

and the supernatural kingdoms are identical, as science and faith together may yet make them appear, is not now considered. I use distinctions that are actual and familiar. The Christian Priesthood belongs in the Order of Grace. It is sheltered under gracious covenants; it is sustained and comforted by gracious nourishments; it is bound by gracious but unyielding obligations; it must meet and abide a gracious but awful judgment. You may say all Christian people are in the Order of Grace, ordained and unordained alike, by virtue of Holy Baptism, with its gifts, promises, and helps, and this is true. But there is a difference none the less; and it is not merely a difference of degree. There is a difference that is specific. The laity live and work principally and necessarily in the sphere of this world. Their relations to the world may be modified, regulated, elevated, sanctified, by the spiritual powers that play in the Kingdom of Christ. The men of the Ministry, on the other hand, live primarily and work distinctively in the Kingdom of

God's grace. It is their home, their intrusted estate, their field of husbandry, their banqueting-house, wide and satisfying. They do a gracious service. They breathe a holy air. They handle consecrated things. They rise up every morning to sacred labors, and lie down every night under an almost audible heavenly benediction. They draw "all their cares and studies this way." Is not the difference real and apparent? Outwardly at least lay people live in the natural world, though guided in it by the Spirit. Clergymen live in the supernatural, dealing from it with the world of natural humanity. This world is visited by the Kingdom of God coming down in the Second Adam and the new creation from on high. The Ministry is of that Kingdom from on high; it represents that new creation; it is the voice, the ambassadorship, the visible agent of the Lord from Heaven, a quickening spirit. Heaven is opened before and above other men; it is behind as well as before, and always peculiarly *with* the men of the Ministry; and it is their privilege, incomparable and un-

speakable, to work directly from its inspiration and by its power.

As this preëminence, not of personal faculty but of august responsibility, is special in kind, so it is conferred by express bestowment in Ordination. Like the tree and herb of the *flora* of the first creation, each divine gift produces "after its kind." The ordinance is according to the nature of the gift. The Church suffers terribly from superficial views of the grace of Orders. Mind, I am not speaking of an outward dignity, advocating clericalism, or encouraging sacerdotal conceit. God forbid! The Church suffers terribly from these things too. You will understand me as pointing to the whole spiritual character, tone, inward attitude and habit of individual clergymen as they go about their holy business. If ordination did not transfer the man from one set of relations to another, if it did not alter the whole standing of his soul beyond everything belonging to his official functions, if it did not set him into new scenery, naturalize and domesticate him among su-

perhuman fellow-laborers, and measure him by extraordinary tests of sanctity and self-denial, then it would be—what so many all around us imagine it to be—a well-devised, interesting, impressive ceremony, and nothing more. Outside the Church, Ordination is hardly supposed to have in it a Divine virtue at all. Inside, its official value is continually asserted, but too often its profound and searching effects on the personal condition of a man's heart and conscience before God are forgotten. Let me entreat you not to overlook them, but rather to make your whole devout life here an expectant, eager preparation to receive them. When you come thither you will have to judge your motives, aims, acts, sacrifices, even your morals, by a peculiar criterion. While you are here making ready for that great hour, you cannot be content to rise in your religious frame no higher than the average religious level outside these walls.

In these few hours that I am to spend with you this week, my dear friends and brothers, I must speak and you must hear

according to these profound truths. You cannot expect me, in this season of unusual access to the secret place of the Mercy-seat, in the solemnity which is upon us all alike on the eve-week of our Lord's Passion, to leave the line of tasks given me and come here simply to discuss the elements or to repeat the maxims of scientific ethics. Of the general duties of Christian penitence and prayer, self-scrutiny and discipline, you are reminded by manuals and directories—multiplied and accessible—as well as by your daily worship. We ought to be occupied here, I am sure, with such special aspects of the higher states and practices of the spiritual man as must come before your conscience and your heart in *the consecration to which you are called*.

The Church in this country wants deacons and priests who have renounced self—self in the three forms of self-indulgence, self-will, and self-promotion. It needs no others. No others can rouse the nation from its spiritual deadness in materialism, in indifference, in frivolity and carnal luxury.

Even intellectual disbelief, what there is of it—and there is not half so much of the intellectual anti-Christ as of the sensual—will yield to nothing else so readily. You are wanted, you may be said to be waited for, if you come with that self-forgotten mind. If you do not, if you cannot, then, with the most affectionate earnestness, with sympathy for you as well as a concern for the Faith and Cause of our Lord, I urge you to stop where you are.

Emphatically I say we are not dealing here with the external denials of that Faith, in infidelity, or wilful error, or vice, or civilized heathenism, or the decorous forms of a rationalized Christianity. These are in large part prodigals of a violated conscience. To be sure, they are not disconnected from the internal life of the Church. They are aggravated by its inconsistencies in clergy or people. By subtle fascinations or overbearing force they dilute its doctrine and corrupt its piety. But they do not enter directly into the particular class of difficulties, or the special lines of self-examination,

which engage our attention now. These interests are distinctively spiritual. They relate either to our own hidden walk with God, or else to those special experiences where our public service is most seriously influenced by our personal religion, and is in fact directly dependent upon it. What strikes us as the faulty feature in the religious state of our community? I think it is a certain *thinness* of Christian character. The great truths of the Creed are not denied, perhaps not even questioned; but they are held with a loose hand. Public ordinances of the Church are not despised, but they are respected much as any other customs are respected, social and literary, with a prevailing feeling that they may be attended to or let alone at each man's option or convenience, and let alone without loss. The language about sacred things remains unchanged, but it means less; it is the current paper of a depreciated capital. Some effort is made to keep up the ecclesiastical institution, or to obtain something for missions; but the moment that effort comes

into conflict with other expenditures, you see with shame how low the relative rank of God's glorious House and its divine economy is in comparison with the overmastering attractions of business or wealth or recreation. These, just so far as they appear, are signs, I do not see why they are not sure proofs, of what it is fair to call by the name I have given it—a thinness of Christian character. If you prefer it you can call it lightness of conviction, or weakness of faith, or a decay of zeal. In any case it is what we are here concerned with, not in the community, but in ourselves. We can do much to remedy it. That is to be your high vocation. That it can be done you ought to believe, because the Word, the Promise, the Passion, the Pentecostal Fire and Wind, the Primitive Age, the great periods of religious revival all along, assure you that it can. How to do it is your question. No man can tell you perfectly. You must seek the answer everywhere. Ask it of the heavens above, ask it of the earth beneath, of the depths of

solitude, of the heights of holy contemplation, of Scripture and history, and of the heart of man, most of all of the Holy Ghost. Seek the answer till you find it. We are here to-night to seek it.

What I submit to you, then, is that this deep secret is to be revealed to you, and that the power to revive the dwindled energy and chilled life of the Church will be in you, in proportion as your own spiritual life is at once deepened and intensified. This may be said to be a natural law of the supernatural kingdom. The fact is forced upon us to whatever quarter we turn, whether to the general philosophy of spiritual influence, to the necessary conditions of the formation of character, to the great examples and authorities in the past, to the comparative results of the ministrations of different men as we see them around us, to the New Testament, or, finally, to the personal ministry of the Saviour Himself. Mark the great spiritual movements of the Church, such movements as we all must long to see renewed. How have they al-

ways begun? Either with a new spirit of consecration, sacrifice, and closer intercourse with God on the part of the clergy, as in the time of the Oratory and St. Sul-pice under Philip Neri, Olier, de Condren, and their friends, and in England at Cambridge and Oxford respectively during the last generation, or else in sporadic agitations among the people, which, precisely because they had not the guidance of God's commissioned prophets and priests, were as transient as they were irregular. To say that a pastor or preacher can never be the means of leading individual souls in his charge to a higher religious state than he has himself attained would be saying too much. I suppose it is one of the most startling and humiliating if also in another view one of the most blessed discoveries that many of you will make as you go on, that you are furnished, among other mysterious endowments, with the capacity of doing that very thing. Sacramental grace is not dependent on the man. However it happens, whether it is because our actual

infirmities are partly concealed, or simply that God's grace works in ways that we know not, overflowing the measures of the earthen vessels, we do find not infrequently that persons in ordinary circumstances, who are almost exclusively under one clergyman's teaching and with smaller advantages than his own, will pass before him and rise far above him in what makes up a holy character. And yet I think I need not argue with you that these exceptional facts do not invalidate the ordinary rule of the Kingdom we serve, that in heart, in religious reality, in strength and simplicity and steadiness of faith, in the power of the spirit, we must *be what we teach* if we would have others follow our teaching, or even believe it. How high the head-waters, so much fulness in the stream.

In feeling this to be the first want, I am confirmed by the testimony which comes now and then, and lately more than ever, from Brethren who are most truly alive in this ministry, of largest experience, and most honored by abiding fruits. Be it true

or be it otherwise that our times are peculiarly unfavorable to walking with God in any vocation, that forces are everywhere acting which dissipate and soften or hinder and unsettle the spiritual mind, that society is indevout, the air dry, the tone of life trivial, we have at any rate enough of these disordering influences on hand to make us very sober, to cast us back on radical principles of self-discipline, and to arraign the inward man with sharp and solemn judgments. Let it be with us, dear brothers, as if we kept a kind of vigil for the Great Commemoration that is at hand with its tender mysteries and meanings,—the Redeemer's agony, cross and grave, seeking at the same time, by looking into that life which is "hid with Christ in God," by fresh resolves and supplications, by a more particular knowledge of our weaknesses and dangers, to be ready to arise and follow the Master whithersoever He shall lead. How often hereafter will the ear of God hear one and another of you crying in loneliness for help in just this difficult, painful

ascent into a noble fulfilment of the vow you will have spoken and the vocation wherewith you are called!

Striking directly, then, into the heart of the whole matter, we encounter as the topic lying foremost in order, *Singleness of Heart*, first in your own life and then in your service; what the Ordinal calls "applying yourselves wholly to this one thing." Analyzing the nature of this obligation we must distinguish between what the law of Christ requires of ministers as Christian persons, each one answerable for the ripeness of his own spiritual manhood, and what the same law requires of them as servants of all classes of men for their salvation. The two are inseparable, and yet they are distinct. In almost every respect it is true that what makes for the character of the man makes for the strength of the minister; and yet one of the most disastrous mistakes of our profession is in overlooking the difference; that is, in imagining that all is right in our interior state before God because we are diligent and busy in work. We con-

stantly hear people who are passing judgment on the religious and moral qualities of a minister follow their various descriptive adjectives with the substantive "man": he is such and such a man, not minister. They expect the common graces, especially the passive ones, in a rather higher degree than in other men; not a different sort. When they come to advert to experiences peculiar to the profession they are apt to specify traits and forces more of the mental and executive than of the spiritual man. He is "able" or "weak," "successful" or "impracticable," "eloquent" or "dull." Religious qualities are ascribed to the man, secular qualities to the clergyman. We still inquire, therefore, what there is about our calling which differentiates the clerical condition from that of the hearer or parishioner. Put the question in another way. Why are so many earnest pastors and preachers, being daily occupied with duties where there are certainly as many advantages for holy living as there are anywhere, nevertheless conscious of needing excep-

tional helps, longing for extraordinary illuminations and unusual refreshments from the Fountain of all their light and peace? It is because these duties, at the same time that they lay upon them singular demands for holiness, yet expose them to singular temptations to unholiness,—singular, I mean, in subtlety, complication, plausibility and pertinacity. Perilous indeed is the state of that minister of the Gospel of Christ—I care not what may be his temperament or his attainments or his position—who has not found out *how* subtle, how plausible and how pertinacious these temptations are. They spring from three chief sources.

First of these is the circumstance that the entire public administration of religion, even in this Church of Christ and His Apostles, is a mixture, and a mixture in which the two ingredients are likely to conflict with each other at any time, anywhere. It is one part spiritual, and one part material and temporal. The latter may at any time become self-seeking, unsanctified, anti-Christian. There will then be ambiguity if not dupli-

ity, and either one is spiritual weakness, a fruit of spiritual disease. There has never yet been a period since Pentecost when this has not happened. The root-sense of the word "holy" in the scriptural tongues is "separate." We speak of the Church as holy, meaning that it is so in its origin, its purpose, its commission, just as all baptized people in the early Church were called saints. The ideal originates the epithets. The name is the name of hope, as the Hebrews named their children, not of biographical or historical fact. We speak of the Church militant: there never was a division, battalion, regiment, company or rank in the army that was made up of soldiers who were undistracted in their loyalty. I am not saying it could be otherwise, or that it was originally promised it would be otherwise, but so it is. There is a secular side. There is a financial economy. There are buildings, money-interests, money-payments, bargains, salaries, various schemes and devices for conciliating the world in its worldly character. There is a capital op-

portunity, not to say invitation, you will find, for the entrance and exercise among church-leaders of a policy and a management which have no inherent connection with the Gospel of life and salvation whatever. Moreover, and this is worse, there is a natural alliance between these ecclesiastical secularities and the personal gifts, accomplishments and abilities of the clergy. Here we are. Amid all the sanctities and respectabilities of church-buildings and ceremonies the great Seducer will tempt you many a time to turn your Orders into a market, your Priesthood into a trade, and to sell your soul for some disguised piece of the world's merchandize. It is a fact of immense signification, of tremendous danger. Looking at it in all its appalling risks to ministerial purity where we live, or in all the mischief that has been born of it age after age, we might wonder that scores of young men go skipping into orders with a kind of gay alacrity, as sanguine as if there lay no fearful nest of deadly snares before their feet, as if no fierce and cruel hands of

principalities and powers, of the rulers of the darkness of this world, moving in the shadows, were feeling after them to find them out, and to throttle all honor and fealty and simplicity in them if they can. Here is the first alarming condition besetting a clergyman's conscience. It is the world inside the Church using the secular element of its present organization to secularize him, by its bribes and prizes, its official honors and personal reputations, its patronage, vestries and applauses. I think you will agree with me that it has never been more generally aggressive than it is now, on the whole, not even among the ecclesiastical preferments and fortunes of the medieval churches, or in the English endowments and livings blindly bestowed by politicians or princes. Why? Because here the worldly spirit comes from below as well as from above, and the whole mass of modern society is permeated by a discouraging confusion as to where the line between the world and the Church really runs. You are to live, God willing, and

you are to be God's heroes or the devil's cowards, in this fight.

I mention, secondly, what goes along with this seductive secular influence, giving it much of its perilous quality,—a natural susceptibility in us all to be impressed by any kind of power, resource, brilliancy, confusing the moral judgment and biasing the soul in favor of a false worship. It is needless to argue the universality of the illusions springing from this source, or to inquire of what better trait, put into the human nature by the Creator, the vulgar deference to it is a perversion. Young students start with it, carry it with them through their preparation, beyond ordination, possibly to the end of their lives, just as they carry, in various degrees, other features of a half-disciplined or imperfectly consecrated manhood. The result is what the Church has all along been obliged here and there to see, clergymen of good ability, well meaning on the whole, well educated, useful in many ways, who nevertheless live from first to last in a shambling compromise

between the principles of the Kingdom which they are sworn to defend and the pretensions or fashions of the world which that Kingdom was sent down from Heaven to condemn and overthrow. Be it a better salary or a cardinal's hat, a metropolitan parish or an academic title, a snug parsonage or social adulation, whatever reward the secret service to the "other King" may be, it is the same disloyalty. In like circumstances and with equal cleverness they would figure along with Cardinal Wolsey or Paul of Samosata, who, with all their splendor, were but superb types of countless village priests and city preachers bending the knees of their hearts to Mammon, waiting on wealth, afraid of politicians, eager for visible success, rendering unto God only a portion of His clear claim, and unto this modern Cæsar or his courtiers, dressed in a petty and brief authority, a great deal that is not Cæsar's at all. It is only with the degrading effect of such servility and such duplicity on the inner man that we have here to do. I adjure you to

look at it through no mist, and early to gird up the loins of your minds to withstand it. Could some purging breath of the Spirit blow away from those who are setting their feet to the service of the Altar all ambition for place and power and display, could they be trained in an unquestioning faith that the Church stands in its own right, is independent of the world around it and only seeks the world's salvation, could they verily believe that neither numbers nor revenues have anything whatever to do with her honor or prosperity, and that her officers have everything they need in having their Master's favor, then how soon bishops, priests, and deacons would stand forth in every land content, serene, revered and trusted, beyond the reach of vexation, beyond the fear of failure! A periodical, which utters what many thousands of Americans believe without regretting, says: "The process of religious decay is partly due to the increasing commercial character of the Church organization." We all know that simplicity of living and man-

ners, an apostolical "weanedness from the world," has drawn an involuntary respect and love to Christ's ministers of whatever name, giving them spiritual dominion even in spite of their loss of apostolical order. Retaining that order, ought we not to be ashamed to part with that power?

There is a third enemy to Singleness of Heart, the more serious in this respect that it presents a puzzling problem to our moral discrimination while it also tries our moral courage. How far is it right for Christ's servant to go in pushing forward into notice any personal gifts or accomplishments he may have, or think he has, in prosecuting the ends of his ministry? By what means can we separate between making the most of our faculties for the glory of God, and making the most of them for our own glory? The difference is plain enough stated in this way in words. I am sure we now and then see a minister whose powers are remarkable, and who yet so uses them that, while they incidentally create a reputation for himself, they leave a clear impres-

sion that he is self-forgetful and unambitious. But neither the abstract distinction nor the beautiful example will make your duty easy, whatever your powers may be. Take the matter, for illustration, in so simple a shape as the performance of a single public service, including, if you please, reading and preaching. The better you read and the better you preach the more effectually will all the holy purposes of the occasion be fulfilled, those purposes for which your studies, your vows, your prayers and the Church's gifts in orders prepare you. But it is just as certain also that the better you read or preach the more the hearers will be likely to admire you personally, praise you, set you a little higher in your relative (professional) standing among your brethren, and the more likely it is that you will go away satisfied with yourself. You may be sure that many of the best of God's workmen confess to themselves that they have been all their ministerial lives perplexed by this complication of motives, and that no casuistry can make them com-

placent at the result. It was a question in the first centuries of the Faith. One of its aspects was the right or wrong of placing young men destined for the Christian priesthood in the schools of famous pagan rhetoricians and philosophers, like that of Libanius at Antioch. On the one hand it was argued that the cause of the Saviour has a right in its servants to the best learning and oratory in the world: on the other, that such heathen culture was not only liable to mislead young scholars and pervert them from the Truth, but that its tendency was to introduce into the Apostolic Church meretricious and ungodly methods foreign to the temper of Christ and the Cross. In substance the same debate may be continued as long as classical literature and forensic practice make a part of the education of candidates: indeed longer than that, for even though the dead languages and the art of elocution were driven utterly out of all our academies, colleges and theological seminaries, there would still be human infirmity enough left to perpetuate the temp-

tation to personal vanity and literary conceit. The further we go into the subject the less practicable anything like a fixed rule is found to be. To resolve that you will execute your public functions with something less than a possible degree of excellence for fear you shall be proud of them, contracting your ability to save your integrity, would be absurd, though instances of it are mentioned in the biographies of morbid Divines,—about as absurd as for a mechanic to do poor work to prevent his employers feeding his avarice by granting him too much pay. And yet who of us is safe with nothing more than a vague and general intention to keep self under? The fire is too hot for that. How can a service be true to the spirit of the Lamb of God who pleased not Himself, whose meekness and magnanimity were equally complete and resplendent, or true to the first principles of His Heavenly Society, if there runs all through it this paltry alternation between the highest and the lowest thoughts, a puerile teeter of the mind between sacrifice

and self-seeking? What room, what allowance, what toleration for it is there anywhere in God's Word? But for the patient forbearance and forgiving mercy of our Lord, where should we be? How could He endure the contradiction of us sinners against Himself? Some of the saints have been very frank. John Chrysostom was. As you read the homilies of that great master you see that his heart was as simple as his speech was golden. When the men in the audience clapped their hands and women waved their handkerchiefs he not only paused and cried out to them, "The church is no theatre; applaud me by a living practice of my doctrine;" that was easy. But he goes on: "When my discourse is received with applause, I confess it, human weakness overcometh me and I am pleased. But when I go home and reflect that you have received no benefit from my sermon, but have lost it in these sounds, I lament it, and feel that I have spoken everything in vain." When king, queen, crowds in the street were most

ready to flatter him, he honestly seized the passing favor to arraign them with the keenest condemnation of their sins. Satan had not then wholly debauched the manliness of Christian parishes into the cowardice of dismissing a pastor for denouncing open iniquity. This apostolic rebuker was finally banished from Constantinople and went into the deserts to die. But it was not the common people that rejected him; their generous instincts clung to him to the last; it was Eudoxia and the Court. "Whatever you may do," he says, once when the whole city seems to have been swept away by a contagion of sensuality, "I know what I have to do. I am responsible for every soul among you, and, whether you shut your eyes or become enraged, I shall so act that I may be pure from the blood of all men, and be able to stand without fear before the judgment-seat of God." Fourteen hundred years later, in a country where the populace is King, we shall be but ill-furnished successors to this exiled John, or to that earlier John by the

Jordan to whom he so often looked back as his pattern in boldly rebuking vice, if we are not prepared to find a court, a Eudoxia, or a Herodias, in a self-willed, self-indulgent and capricious community. What we are to pray for is that we may hold fast singleness and sweetness of spirit together.

One rule you certainly can adopt in this regard, and it would be a most wholesome one for your own welfare, for the instruction of those you teach and for the dignity of your office. Never welcome or encourage by any manifestation of pleasure in it a personal compliment for any sacred act belonging to your ministry. Much less is it morally decent to seek by any half-concealed, indirect comment of your own to draw out such commendation. Reading prayers is a sacred act. Preaching is a sacred act. Imagine a Hebrew outside the Tabernacle complimenting a priest or a high priest on the artistic skill or grace of gesture with which he discharged his sacerdotal duty at one of the national solemnities! Imagine a piece of flattery addressed

by Dionysius the Areopagite to St. Paul after he preached at Mars Hill, or anybody praising him for the diction or the logic of one of his Epistles! Remember how many times that heroic and yet "humble man of heart" has emphasized his entire distrust of his own powers and his intense disesteem for the praise of men. I lay some stress on this caution, because I am sure that consistently acting upon it is not only a point of good Christian manners, but that it would destroy a great deal of that lust for approbation which is at once a blemish in our behavior and a poison to our spiritual life. It would operate very much like cutting off the top growth of a weed when you cannot get at the root. Keep cutting and cutting, and finally the noxious thing will die for lack of what its nature lives on through its stock and leaves. The praise is pleasant, but it feeds an appetite. Reject it and the appetite for it will abate, perhaps finally perish. The habit of making a church robing-room a scene for laudatory comments, after we have been worshipping

Almighty God and confessing our sins and preaching His Word, is incongruous. The recipient makes but a foolish figure; and if the by-standers' minds were actually uncovered there would be embarrassing disclosures. What should we say if, after the engineer has run his train properly from one city to another, half a dozen of his fellow-workmen should think it necessary to gather round him to congratulate and eulogize him? He would take it as an insult or a jest. He has done his duty, done his best, just as it is to be supposed the preacher has done his best every time he preaches. If he has done less he ought to be ashamed. Of course this has nothing to do with a simple utterance of gratitude out of the heart for some benefit, comfort, or strength received from a sermon. Such acknowledgments are refreshing cordials after ministerial work. They are legitimate, as they are properly private, and they furnish a part of the wisest guidance we get in bettering our poor productions. Everybody can distinguish the two things from one

another. We ought to have some courteous way of letting those about us feel that we understand this difference, and that while the one is distasteful, as every temptation ought to be, the other is acceptable, because it belongs not so much to what we are, or do, or speak, as to the Spirit of Truth who has condescended to use us for the time, and to speak through our lips.

Another consideration which I think ought to make the ablest ministers slow to magnify themselves in their ministry is that, although it has pleased Providence to employ some eminent gifts in all ages in the service of the Church, by far the greater portion of the actual and solid work of the Gospel and Kingdom of Christ has been done by men of moderate parts. I do not forget exceptions. I remember that when Massillon in his later years entreated that he might be permitted to retire from Paris, and finally carried his point, the authorities interfered and persuaded the Pope to order him back to the metropolis. There are other exceptions far and near, but they are

exceptions after all. Of the examples of great religious prosperity in parishes that I can recall, nearly all have been produced by clergymen of average ability, but always by those who in a faithful stewardship made the best possible use of what talents they had, and who united common sense, patience, and cheerfulness with hard labor. Indeed, it is somewhat doubtful whether in the long run and in all their bearings the ministries of very celebrated speakers have yielded more than the average measure of benefit or less.

My dear brothers, we want the "single mind." I place that first. It is the mind of Christ. I have hoped by these examples of a common obliquity to turn your attention even while you are here to the underlying and indwelling sin out of which so many of our secular perversions and duplicities arise. The special offence we consider now is the double mind, a perturbed and soiled current of selfish ambitions and appetites running along the course of our consecrated calling. What name shall we give to that spiritual grace or holy frame of the inward

man by which this treacherous ambiguity shall be cast out, as fear is cast out by perfect love? Our Blessed Lord's saying in the Sermon on the Mount suggests the answer: "The light of the body is the eye; if therefore thine eye be single thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If, therefore, the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" It is singleness of heart and mind: *ἀπλοτης*. The thing that is *ἀπλους* is a thing that is opened and spread out, without folds or hiding-places, like the expanded canopy, the generous front of the unwrinkled sky, into which all eyes may gaze and see all that is there to be seen; *simplex, sine plicis*. Do we not recognize it at once by its name as that transparent, crystalline purity of soul which we are to pray for and strive after as the fittest and worthiest of all inward states for him who speaks as the ambassador of the Sinless One, in whose lips no guile is found, for him whose hands bear the vessels of the Lord, for him whose

chief and unceasing concern is that which is signified in the august phrase, "the cure of souls"? Do we not attribute it involuntarily to every real saint whose image stands, luminous, venerable, enthroned in the hallowed halls of ages past? Surely it is not presumptuous in us to long for it, to try for it, to hope for some increasing measure of it! If we can find out by what avenues the Adversary is most likely to come to assail and spoil it, and so set guards of watchfulness and resolution to protect it—if we can discover what self-denial, what self-discipline, what contemplations or occupations will provide the strongest security for it, then no vigilance, no scrutiny or pains will be too costly a price for this singleness of heart. Above all, if we see it to be one of the divine marks of the Saviour Himself, who is "holy, harmless, and undefiled," seeking it for His sake, we shall then surely find it in Him, and in finding it find Himself.

- And then how certain you will be to learn from Him not only the true spirit of

your own personal life, but also in what humility and constancy, having the insight which the single eye commands, you can do all the least showy and the least promising of the labors set before you! Jesus of Nazareth preached. An English hand, with firm and graphic lines, tells us how He preached. "He often spoke to large audiences, but He never refrained because His listeners were few. What minister charged with such a message as, 'Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life,' would have told it for the first time to a poor sinful woman whom he met by the wayside? Would he not rather have reasoned that his church must be unusually full before such a marvelous announcement could be delivered? Surely many masters in Israel should have been present to hear the answer to the question which has vexed and troubled the Church in all ages, as to where and how the

Father was to be worshipped. But no; the same wondering woman, standing with her water-pitcher in her hand, was taught that neither exclusively in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, 'was the Father to be worshipped, but that the true worshippers worship Him in spirit and in truth.' Jesus knew she would go on her way and stop every one she met to repeat what she had heard, and to say 'Come.' This, too, is our hope when the thought depresses us that these small means and talents of ours can never affect such masses of evil as we see around us. Each rescued soul becomes a light set upon a hill that cannot be hid, and many will make use of this light to guide themselves out of darkness."

I do not know how many of you may have read a little book lately published for Christ's working men—little in bulk, but large in thoughts which stir and upheave the human world—written by one of the women who are doing more to make England noble than titles or coronets. It

ends with these words: "Years and years hence, when you have grown old and sit with faded hands folded in the twilight, musing over your past life, see if the fairest, sweetest, most lasting joy is not the recollection of that early labor of love that first swept you up out of yourself into the very life of God, which is the redemption of the world."

God the Father give you the single mind!
God the Son deliver you from that idol of the world which the world has named "success!" God the Holy Ghost grant that as He chooses you to stand before Him and to serve in His mysteries, so you may never fall from the grace of Holy Orders which you will receive of His bounty, through Jesus Christ our Lord!

II.

SPIRITUAL SENSIBILITY.

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LAST evening the subject was that Christian grace of the Ministry known in the New Testament as Singleness of Heart. We pass now to another. To bring it before you the more distinctly, I will ask you to call up before you an imaginary scene which, one day or another as time goes on, many of you here will probably say is not so much a fiction as the copy of a reality.

A minister busily engaged in the varied offices of his calling, working on with a tolerable measure of apparent usefulness, finds himself in some unoccupied hour turning in upon the secret things of his own personal life. It may be late Sunday night. He is alone in his study. The public labor of the day has left him tired, but with the mental mechanism, in spite of some bodily weariness, rather stimulated

and limbered than dulled by the eight or ten hours of incessant strain now over. He is in a mixed mood, half satisfaction and half discontent. He has seen some signs of interest, other signs of indifference. There were some at the worship whom he did not expect to see, others absent whom he was anxious to reach. Some of his words went out on wings, Homer's *ἔπεα πτεροεντα*, and went home, he thinks, whither they were sent, with a freedom and energy not his own, as if they were arrows shot from a bow drawn by an unseen hand behind him. Others, which were wholly his own, into which he put more of himself, and which no *afflatus* from beyond himself seemed to take up and bear on, fell flat from his lips, far short of any conscience or any heart. He recalls a kind, appreciative look or word from a parishioner or stranger. It gives him pleasure; he does not now stop to ask whether it is the pleasure of vanity caressed or the pleasure of having let in upon some human soul a new impulse to holy living, planted a

fertile truth, and put forth an awakening spiritual power. On another face, perhaps the face of a troubler in the parish, he thought he saw a trace of disfavor, coldness or a sneer; he does not now stop to ask whether the pain this gave was because Christ was dishonored, truth rejected, a soul injured, or because it was ominous of waning popularity, threatened the loss of a pew occupant, or hurt his pride. One moment he is mortified that the discourse which he took to church with confidence or hope turned out weak, confused, or unreal, and in his disgust he would be glad never to preach again. But the mood changes, and he gathers courage to struggle once more after that ideal sermon which always is to be, but never is.

So his thoughts run on. Suddenly, somehow, let us believe it is by the untraceable movement of the Spirit of God on his mind, this aimless process is arrested. The point of view is utterly altered. Retrospection gives place to introspection. He looks within himself, and lo, there opens upon

him a whole interior world! What kind of a world is it? The people, the faces of the congregation, the interests, success and failure, numbers and income, fame and favor, drift away. New questions arise to search and try him, what manner of man he is. If I am that man, I am thinking of a living circle of persons and things of which I am the accountable centre. The centre should be the heart. Can the circle be expected to be better than the heart is? I am the guide of this people; but what guides me? I am their teacher; but at whose feet do I sit to be taught, in meekness, docility, and obedience? The same passions or infirmities that I deplore or condemn in them, are they not in me also, in forms less gross or obvious indeed, because the very safeguards of my profession require that, but though more subtle and refined, yet just as untrue, unclean, unworthy, ungodly? In a word, to the eyes of Christ how must a merely professional virtue appear? Is not this the very essence of that pharisaism which was about the only thing

He unsparingly rebuked, or if carried a little further the hypocrisy which He unqualifiedly cursed? Ought I not to suspect in myself that character which is only a character of conformity; an integrity which might grow out of the position in which I stand; a religiousness which every interest of my life binds upon me; a chastity which, if not lost, is only not lost because it would carry away with it standing, influence, reputation, salary, all together tomorrow; a devotion which is to my prospects in this world exactly what acuteness and adroitness are to a lawyer, or observation to a doctor, or enterprise to a trader; a zeal and a fervor which are the instrument of my promotion and the measure of my distinction? Is there no actual pressing peril here? Amidst all these fair-seeming activities of piety and charity in which I am engaged, is there not a fearful possibility that my motives may gradually degenerate till, in the apathy of solemn details, the torpor of only a perfunctory ministerial operation, I prove no better than the bond-

men of the world? I ask then, not What am I doing? but What am I? not How is the parish getting on? but How does my inmost soul look to God? What is the real spirit underneath all my work? Uncover my heart, O my God! and show me to myself. Am I ready to take up David's cry in the Psalm, "Try me, O God, and seek the ground of my heart; prove me and examine my thoughts"? He will certainly hear me if I entreat sincerely, "Make me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me. O give me the comfort of Thy help again, and stablish me with Thy free Spirit." When I have been so searched, cleansed, empowered from on high, "Then shall I teach Thy ways unto the wicked, and sinners shall be converted unto Thee."

We come to another peculiar exposure of the vocation you have chosen, or let me rather say of your souls in that vocation, wherewith you believe you are called of God. I mean the benumbing and perhaps

deadening effect of official routine, of the unfelt repetition of sacred tasks. What it leads to is spiritual apathy. Perhaps I may render you a service, such as only an elder brother can render a younger, by putting you on your guard against it. In its earlier stages it renders us superficial in religion, careless in prayer, unequal to great sacrifices, slow in our perceptions of delicate moral discriminations, wanting in vigorous condemnations of sin as well as in clear recognitions of high states or graces, and awkward and impotent in dealing with difficult cases of conscience brought to us by our people. It produces religious mediocrity. We are thinking all the time of the functions and the organs; so many sermons, so many families to be visited, so many calls in a week, so many celebrations of sacraments, so many charities to be organized and regulated, so many accounts to be kept, so many items to be entered in a parish register; we are not thinking so much of the original springs of life whence the function is vitalized and the organs derive

their living force. Gradually the parish takes on more and more the aspect of a railroad, a regiment, a factory, or a bank. The minister unconsciously sinks more and more into a functionary, a superintendent, a presiding officer, a colonel, a manager. Those horrid phrases which the modern commercial mind has applied to the holy dignities of the Church come then to be fit descriptions: The parish is "run," the pastor and priest is "hired," he is "posted," he is a "stirring man," a "smart preacher," he makes the machine "go." Then certain second-rate qualities, like sagacity, shrewdness, popularity, social plausibility, joined, it may be, if nature has furnished the faculty, with volubility or vocal skill in the pulpit, are advanced to the loftiest estimation in ministerial merit. The mortal elements have encroached on the Divine, and more and more they degrade the mystery and hide the glory.

Perhaps some dim consciousness exists that this process is going on. But conscience is quieted—this is the next stage of

decline—by the apology that it is sacred work. There is so much that must be done, and it is done at least in the name of the Lord! The laity will not do their part. Time is cut up. Interruptions come continually to the door. Public affairs are exacting—schools, philanthropy, dinners, conventions, fairs, semi-benevolent entertainments. How can we get leisure to take a long and steady look into the deep eternity, into the starry heights where the lives of saints shine, into the face of Christ? And if we do not, shall we not be excused? We are occupied about sacred things; will not some of the sanctity cleave to our fingers? Here all about us are spiritual subjects, scriptures, sanctuaries, symbols, robes, attitudes, titles; we are ordained; we are leading an ecclesiastical life; must it not be that somehow the odor of this atmosphere will preserve us, even though we do not stop much to inquire what is going on in the secret recesses within, or do not withdraw and ask the brooding spirit of the Holy One to hide us under the shadow of His wing?

We will hope that by much speaking or much moving our shallow piety will be condoned. "The Lord pardon Thy servant in this thing." But will He? Or will you be satisfied with yourself? That depends on what your standard is; on what you long and hope to be. If professionalism will satisfy you, here it is. If a pattern of clerical propriety, or a series of bustling parochial demonstrations, large confirmation classes, filled seats, an astute ecclesiastical generalship *plus* the tones and dress of a parson, are the sum and substance of what our Lord meant when He said: "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" or when He rings through and through your heart the piercing questions of the Ordination Office; if it is sacerdotalism that you covet instead of that profounder priestliness which keeps all the spiritual senses open toward God and heaven while the hands are busy here; if it is sheer outward success that you seek, instead of God's light in your breast, and God's love in what you speak, and God's mark on what you do—why,

then, your Master may probably say of you, as He said of a class not very unlike you when He was on earth, "Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward." But what the reward will be, what sort of honor, what sort of blessing, what sort of salvation—that is another matter altogether.

There is a further depth of the same delusion, which I shall only touch briefly because, in its extreme at least, it can hardly be supposed to be very frequent. I mean clerical antinomianism. You will see, however, that it is a logical product or sequence of the fallacy that our sacred office protects us from temptation, or exempts us from the full stress of personal obligation, or makes up for us a special code of morality, so that what might be culpable in other men is pardonable in those who are conversant with the forms and duties of religion. Some of the grossest scandals in the Ministry, not only in past history but in our day and country, have sprung from precisely that root. Instead of the consecrated vocation being taken as imposing a

responsibility and a motive for a stricter obedience to the moral law, it is taken as setting him who is called in it above that law. This active servant is thought to be of too much importance to the purposes of the Almighty to be judged by ordinary rules. He extenuates transgression in himself, possibly he commits and repeats hidden sin, on no other pretence than that his general external religiousness warrants it. It is one of the most frightful abuses of the perilous art of casuistry, fit to be ranked with the seductive abominations of Liguori. A fair deduction would be that the nearer man comes to God in his employments, the less scrupulous he may be in his conduct. The link between religion and righteousness would be dissolved, and the door would open for the new school of Pagan philosophy appearing lately on the continent of Europe, whose creed is that a personal Deity is perhaps a scientific necessity, but that his moral character is mixed, evil deific attributes being mixed with the good.

One may say—I am sure *I* am in no dan-

ger of being betrayed into sanctimoniousness or immorality; for my whole conscious nature revolts at both the one and the other. But are we so sure that we are in no danger of a less noticeable decline of spiritual purity and vigor? It has been often observed that, in theological schools, the constant occupation of the mind in the study of divinity is very far from supporting a high religious temperature in the student. No doubt pastoral activity and sympathy do much to remedy this morbid suppression of the devotional by the scholastic habit, and yet I think the difficulty by no means ends at ordination.

Why should we not recognize an analogy between the influence of mechanical task-work on the spiritual life of the ministry and on the intellectual force spent in secular pursuits? Every kind of work that deserves to be done at all deserves to be nourished and enlivened from a fountain of inspiration higher than itself. The notion that a merchant or engineer, a lawyer or a physician, can get all the knowledge or en-

thusiasm needed in his employment while he is busy at its details, is fatal to liberal attainments or great achievements. There are two ways of doing all work. One is to succumb to the necessities of the task, to fill the time, to finish the job, to get a living, to plod abjectly through the wonted motions, with no spring, no light, no joy. As there are metallic craftsmen and automatic operatives, so there are preachers with whom, when the text lifts the gate, the mill-wheel of the sermon begins to revolve. They miss the charm which God has woven, for those who choose to catch it, about every honest calling, and above all others about the Christianizing of men and the communicating of God's life to the world. A service so intensely engaging ought not to lose its fascination by the repetition of its forms. Masters in any pursuit see their position not only on its actual but its ideal side. If we call this enthusiasm, it is an enthusiasm without which most of the intellectual monuments and glories of all time would never have been. When

Anaxagoras, the astronomer, was rebuked for neglecting affairs and offices of state, he replied: "My concern is for my country in yonder sky." It is told of Dante that he went out to see a pageant in the streets, but was so profoundly preoccupied with other processions in other worlds that he came back not knowing that the pomp had gone by; and of Rittenhouse that he actually fainted with the excitement and delight of observing after long expectation the transit of the planet Venus across the disk of the sun.

The analogue to these examples of mental sensibility is the spiritual life in which every minister of Christ must maintain himself who would not have his ministration belittled in his hands, and himself at last a "castaway." What ideality is to the artist, the poet, the originator anywhere, devotion or communion with God is to a parish priest. Indeed, the best scientific mind in our day in pure mathematics has argued that ideality in the investigation of nature is the connecting link between the natural and

the supernatural, and forms a philosophical basis for the necessity of at least a theistic religion, with prayer, for every thinking man.

I used the word "castaway." What is St. Paul's meaning in the ninth to the Corinthians? *'Αδοκίμος*, you learn, is one who not merely comes in after the other runners at the end of the race, failing by reason of some want of strenuous effort while the contest is going on, but one who has been untrue to the very conditions and law of the race itself, who is defective in the preparation or training beforehand. He is precisely in the fault of the steward of the Mysteries of God who rushes through the round of his duties without having been made equal to them by secret spiritual discipline. In the Olympics, the amount of time occupied by the public struggle, a trial of strength or speed, was almost nothing compared with the athlete's previous exercise. Days, weeks, months, with temperance, self-denial, self-bruisings, were not too much to get the body in due order.

The flash of human forms and straining limbs across the arena was but the short test of what the long antecedent drill was worth. The running, "not as uncertainly," the fighting "not as one that beateth the air," depend on that patient keeping under, that enslaving of the flesh, in retirement, no eye looking on, no cheers or "cloud of witnesses" lending exhilaration. *Ἰπωπιάζω καὶ δουλαγωγεῶ*. What will sustain both the tedious and the victorious trial? Not apathetic repetition. There can be no routine performance here. All Greece is looking on. Dear brethren, can you help asking yourselves how you will bear the application of this searching image of the Apostle to yourselves when you shall have become runners, watchmen, contestants in a different "agonizing"? whether, lest you should be castaways, you are as anxious to lay in fresh supplies of power, that you may save yourselves and them that will hear you?

If we examine the chief terms that designate the ministerial office, we shall see that they involve this doctrine of a supply of

something in our own souls which has to be not merely kept from expiring, but added to and revived, to save us from degeneration and contempt. "Minister" implies something to be ministered. No more can be imparted than is contained. No more can go out than comes in. For the thing ministered the Apostolic name is "grace." It is true that it is not of ourselves; it is of the Holy Ghost, and comes down from above. But it does not force its way down. There are conditions of receiving it as well as of imparting it, and they are vital conditions. We are not mere conduits of the divine stream, or pipes of the divine sound, or polished reflectors of the divine light. Adopt what theory of sacerdotal authority we may, we cannot pretend, unless we break loose from Scripture altogether, that in the Christian Church the New Testament term which designates ministerial service is separable from personal character, or that the priesthood is not wounded when the priest is not holy. From beginning to end the Bible

never implies that we are only functionaries or operators. "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord." But you are to be more than vessel-bearers, more than vessels. This "grace," "gift," "life," "message," call it what we will, descending from on high, must enter us first as conscious receivers, becoming assimilated to the springs of our personal being. Otherwise we are like wooden cisterns from which the water is evaporated; the vessel itself cracks and is useless. Nothing will make up for the loss if there is not a direct drawing from the "wells of salvation." Nothing in pastoral activity can take the place of that power which comes directly, however silently, from an immediate contact with the unseen. Where there is no vision the people perish—more accurately, are let loose, or run wild as barbarians. It was the darkest time in Israel when there was no "vision." In the Patriarchate, the Hebrew commonwealth, the empire, while a strict ritual protected the worship of the Sanctuary, the moral strength of the nation was renewed

by voices of prophets coming freshly forth from communion with God in solitude. Our divine Master was oftener alone than in the Temple. The power of His hours in the Mount is felt in His miracles among human dwellings and His preaching by the wayside. To what an inferior level the whole work and speech of the Apostles would be reduced but for their frequent retreats into solitude and their continuing instant in prayer!

It is time to mention two or three of the particular means of gathering and regathering this needful ministerial grace. We will place first what I have just alluded to—seasons of seclusion carefully provided for and guarded in the plan of living. Is it not remarkable, in the biography not only of ancient prophets and saints, but of great characters generally, that in some period of their lives they were held apart from men? Much intercourse with society tends to make clergymen ready and broad probably, but if it is perpetual it tends also to make the clerical character superficial and thin.

Something is felt to be wanting. A minister has serious reason to suspect something wrong in himself if he finds that he is uneasy at being left alone. The habits of the clergy are much changed. Formerly constant publicity was not expected, and it was rare. In country places the temptation to it is comparatively not very great; there are no book-stores or other convenient resorts; the families are scattered, and are not looking for visitors till toward the end of the day; public assemblies suitable for ministers are not very frequent. In cities and large towns it is otherwise. But it may be said of the theological student and the minister alike, wherever each may live, that for the most part when he goes into company it should be either directly or indirectly for the benefit of others. That was our Lord's example. He took pains to draw the disciples aside. "Come ye apart and rest awhile." Deserts and silences appear to have been regarded as a positive requirement in the economy of mediation. I know how easy it is for a pastor of execu-

tive tastes and abilities having manifold sorts of church work on hand, with hourly interruptions, to content himself with the reflection that he is meant to be a toils-man and a minute-man, pleading that so only his time is given to the people they should be satisfied. We are here, however, dealing with general principles of the spiritual life. I believe it is quite impossible to maintain it at its highest degree of sensibility or its healthiest action without so much systematic sequestration as shuts off the presence of all people, leaving an unobstructed access to the soul of the Spirit of God.

This rule may be supplemented with another. It will do very much to sustain and vitalize personal piety, and to break up the narcotizing effect of routine, if while engaged in your various sacred offices you put forth special efforts of the will, to join your own personality with the function, so as to make what you read and say arraign, rebuke, encourage or comfort—as the case may be—your own soul. Consider the

ministration addressed to yourself as much as to the congregation. My impression is that if, at the close of most of our services in church, we of the Ministry look back with this view, to see during how much of the time we were conscious of any such act as bringing home to ourselves the words we have used, or conscious of being directly in the presence of our Lord, we are humiliated. Yes, dear friends, we argue and debate and contend fluently about Christ's real presence; but how often when we are standing or kneeling in His holy place, speaking for Him, speaking to Him, touching perhaps the very symbols of His agony and seals of His mercy, do we realize what His presence is, or feel it in our souls that the eyes which searched Peter's heart search ours? that the ears which heard the prayers of pharisee and publican hear ours? Still more ashamed should we be if we should recall accurately what the thoughts glancing through the mind actually were. Were they thoughts of our pardon, or our performance? Of other

men's impression of us, or of God's unerring judgment? Are we praying while we read prayers? In the Confession, is it at all as if all mortal ears were removed, and the pronouns became singular? In the Lessons, does the Word of God strike in upon the heart to be heard there while it goes out to the audience? At the Eucharistic Feast, does the entrance of the life-giving food make our oneness with Christ and the Sacrifice of the Cross such realities to us that the accessories of the scene—numbers, music, postures, manipulations, manners at reception—recede to their due subordination? Is it not very significant that in God's earlier Church the priest did at the great offering first make atonement for his own sin and then for the sins of the people? In proportion as we get rid of ourselves, this personal appropriation of the divine nourishment, this personal realization of the worship that we lead, becomes possible and becomes blessed.

Much the same might be said of pastoral calls. He must make his way through

them, it seems to me, with a shallow mind, who does not gather from them quite as much as he imparts; who does not bear away for his own warning or consolation as much as he leaves behind. All human lives, that touch one another at all, influence and fashion one another. It would be shameful if by what I see of the sufferings wrought by sin in any member of my flock my own sins were not rebuked and made hateful. It would be a terrible loss if each instance of saintly goodness or sweet trust or domestic magnanimity I see did not revive my own sluggish virtue, or quicken me a little in my inglorious and halting way. But there is not the least reason to expect that anything of this kind will happen unless by voluntary attention you turn what Providence shows you of the working of His hand in these neighbor-lives into testimonies and commandments and promises for yourselves; unless you cry with all your might, "Show Thou me, by those side-lights about my path, the way that I should walk in!"

There is one other special way of keeping alive the spiritual sense—a way wonderful yet very practical. It is that while we are engaged about our hallowed work we recur habitually to the fact that we are surrounded and witnessed by supernatural companions in the invisible and spiritual world. As ministers going through divine service in church we are always to think of ourselves as ministering in the company of the Lord Jesus Himself. We are also attended by a multitude of worshippers worshipping with us unseen, a never-disappointing throng even when we see before us only two or three or one. To believe in such companionships is an incalculable support. Why should we not believe in them? Throughout the gospel history, from the Annunciation to the Ascension, we stand before opened heavens. Such is the naturalness of the supernatural, if we may say so, that Christians of every period reading Holy Scripture have felt no more surprise at the mention of a messenger from another world as appearing near the Son of

Man than at any other biblical occurrence. The same is true of the lives of the Apostles. At the same time, am I not right in saying that we meet large numbers and even bodies of modern Christians to whose habitual religious ideas and feelings all this other-world life is completely foreign? Are there not thousands and tens of thousands of them from whose religious convictions and associations, and sympathies, even in their most devout seasons, it all lies off—not exactly denied, but legendary or apparitional? Cherubim and Seraphim, St. Michael, and all the company of Heaven, Paradise, the returning spirits of Moses and Elias, are to them only the machinery of a poem. People treat them as dry critics do the epic supernaturalism of Dante and Milton. Has all this no effect on practical piety, on character, on worship, and the whole service of the Ministry? When living glories have vanished from the skies, leaving nothing there but soulless spheres about which astronomers dispute whether their frosts and fires permit any life to be in them at all,

when everything in space beyond the Andes and Himalayas is reduced to barrenness, and no intelligence but a distant God is allowed above the human head, though living creatures in countless gradations are thick all the way *down* to the germ-cell, will nothing be missed and nothing be lost from the spiritual part of man himself? It seems to me impossible. Nature, says Leibnitz, never makes a leap; he thereby gives as grand a truth to theology as to physics. If nature makes no leap from the germ-cell to Adam, she makes none from Adam to Him who said, "Let there be light," and hangeth the earth upon nothing. The interval between Deity and us is not empty. I think we see increasing defects in a too terrestrial religion. Little by little it is attenuated. Faith is frost-bitten. Everything is begrudged to the mind except inquiry and doubt. One doctrine or ordinance after another is rationalized. At last Jesus Himself is followed rather as a leader and reformer of the race, the manliest of men, than as the atoning "Lamb of

God which taketh away the sins of the world." Social science cries, "Behold the man!" with Pilate, rather than "My Lord and my God!" with St. Thomas. Some richness and depth of grace, some power of prayer, some tender quickness of sensibility, must disappear when this world becomes more and more, and the other less and less. We shall do better—O, how much better!—to rise up and lie down, to live and walk and worship, to go about our daily pastoral work, to preach and minister sacraments, as those who "have come unto Mount Zion, unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the first-born which are written in Heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant."

Finally, do not be discouraged. Humility is not discouragement. So far as my reading and memory go, a keen conviction of personal unworthiness has appeared as a

permanent element in the spiritual frame of all memorable ministers whose interior life has in any way been opened to the world. In a very large proportion of cases, that conviction has been attended by a deep feeling of incompetency to the high calling. This would seem to be just as common with the most distinguished as the most obscure. What we call success, celebrity, admiration, have apparently nothing to do with it. I could easily fill up an hour with sincere confessions of this sort from famous preachers. What could more impressibly elevate the office of a Christian teacher than this solemn undertone of self-dissatisfaction, sounding along through the whole line of holy leaders from Pentecost to this hour, "Not unto us, not unto us"? It is a confession of "that mysterious secret" which "keeps sweeping from us evermore"; an unrealized ideal, an unfulfilled hope, a grief of shortcoming just as sad in the weary heart of the veteran priest and soldier who lies down to rest at four-score, as in the sobered spirit of the young

deacon at the first anniversary of his ordination. We may take it as one of the human confirmations of the promise of the resurrection—that after death we are to live and in some way minister again, where no such limitations will close us in, no such chains drag at our feet, no such awful abyss separate between what we would be and what we are. A Christian's despair of perfection on earth is a prophecy of his immortality.

It ought to be impossible, the Lord being forever at the head of His Kingdom, that His officers and workmen should be disheartened. The most solitary missionary at the farthest outpost in the darkest continent does not work alone. All live and serve together in that one Kingdom, in the presence of all its powers, under the eyes of its superhuman agents, sustained by its everlasting realities. Over them, however it may be with the men of this world, it must be that the angels of God descend and ascend. Above all, in the midst of all, not far from any one of His servants, stands the Shep-

herd of all the shepherds, the Light of every prophet who teaches, the Advocate of every comforter who heals and consoles human hearts. He speaks and we hear, "Without Me ye can do nothing." It is the heart of Christ that speaks. When Moses and Elias had passed out of sight, on the Mount of Transfiguration, the disciples saw "Jesus only." But He had shown them that the veil is taken away and that the gates of heavenly glory are not shut, day or night.

III.

SELF-SACRIFICE.

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IN the two former conferences it has been found that the foremost demand on modern Christianity is that of a revival of the spirit of self-consecration, which is a spirit of sacrifice; and that this renewal of apostolic life must be begun and be led, like other spiritual revivals in the Church Catholic, by a self-sacrificing clergy. This goes to the root of all holy obedience, as the Cross itself is the symbol and interpreter of the Christian faith.

The truth is sharp-edged. It makes large drafts on personal courage, as well as on other elements of personal religion. It makes religion costly. It is not popular in the pulpit; it is less and less so. We hear little of it from popular preachers. The parochial system succeeds in a certain fashion without it, and succeeds a good deal in smothering it. That, however, is not of

great moment to us here. We are near to Calvary, and drawing nearer day by day. You are not taking for your pattern the young ruler who went away sorrowful. I gladly believe you want to hear nothing less than the whole law of God, and are heroic enough to bear the reproach that fell upon your crucified Lord.

Compare the clergy of our own day with the clergy of the Pentecostal and Apostolic period. Down to the last moment of the evangelic history the standard of ministerial consecration is not lowered. For example, except for condemnation or warning, we have no knowledge of any minister there selecting his field of labor for its external advantages, its income or social privileges; none of a clergyman leaving one place for another on the offer of superior honors or emoluments; none of a clergyman putting a money-value at all on his work; none of a clergyman shrinking from any task or avoiding it or diminishing it on account of its hardship; none of a clergyman disparaging a brother-clergyman to his own better-

ment by contrast; none of a clergyman subordinating the religious edification or harmony of the Christian body or any part of it to his own self-will, or to any scheme, opinion, or course of proceeding of his own choosing. These things all came in. But each one of you young men, candidates for the Holy Ministry, speaking from your higher manhood no less than from your baptismal vow and churchly nurture, will say that they came of apostasy; that they do not belong to the original integrity and purity of the Kingdom of Christ.

You will not wish to break the force of this affirmation by objecting—*tempora mutantur*. The serious question remains whether *nos mutamur*, and if so, on what warrant we are changed. It may be said with some force that the early age had no parishes like ours, few settled pastors with large families, less need of a long and costly course of preparatory study, was less prohibitory as to ministers doing secular work, and insisted less on a clergyman's keeping up a certain style of living corresponding

with that of his well-provided parishioners. I look back over my several items of contrast, and I do not see that any of these last-mentioned considerations so touches one of them as to excuse us from a conscientious attention to their moral obligation. With a keen sense of ill-desert, I cannot honestly allow that for me or for you the old Gospel requirement of self-renunciation on the ordination threshold can be relaxed in the least. I go further, and submit that our modern non-conformity to the law of Christ and His Apostles in this respect, with all its specious excuses and palliations, may probably be a cause of the slowness and coldness and weakness of the Church, to say nothing of the unbelief and carelessness of the world. The first recommendation I should make, therefore, in this subject is that you should form a habit of frequent comparison between your own life, as respects self-denial or the willingness for it, and that of the men whom our Lord chose and sent out to represent and preach Him to mankind. "The groundwork of all clerical educa-

tion," says M. Perraud, a continental student of history and theology, "lies in Holy Scripture and the earliest tradition. The first laws of our Apostolic ministry have not changed since the time when Andrew and Peter, James and John, left their nets to become fishers of men, and we still seek the first rules of ecclesiastical perfection among those primitive fathers and first councils which breathe the very purest and healthiest spirit of Christianity."

In the next place, in your preparatory self-examinations here, which ought to be renewed every day and deepened every Lent, it seems to me you should follow the New Testament method of measuring, arraigning, and judging yourself more by absolute and independent principles, however conscientious in making the application of those principles, than by literal rules or a formal directory prescribing a daily religious regimen. I would speak with some diffidence on this point, because, though I am very sure of the expediency in my own case, I am aware that some good men,

whose piety I venerate, think otherwise. I can profit myself a little, but not very much, by these fixed allowances and limitations, or by determined degrees of physical privation. Thus, for instance, I see that both the Gospel and the Church demand that we should fast. Fast, then, we must; for those are God's teachers, and God knows us better than we know ourselves. Truth received from Him we must both practice and teach; and here as in other places He graciously permits us to learn the value of His ordinance by its chastening effect upon ourselves. But there is another truth. There are so many kinds and shapes of personal sacrifice, pertaining to other and much less manageable parts of my complex constitution, where I can lay on the cross to as good purpose, and where it hurts so much more, that the idea of keeping up a state of spiritual elevation chiefly by a constant reminder to reduce the amount of bodily nourishment—most clergymen's labors being what they are—is one difficult to be invested to me with reality and religious

power. It is harder for me to regulate my tongue than my palate. I suspect most men addicted to studious habits and public speech have a more dangerous appetite for literary indulgence and the luxury of reputation than for meat or wine. I do not see why we should not believe, if we are in earnest at all, that temperaments are meant to be unlike in this respect as in so many others, and that, as physically one man's "meat is another man's poison," so morally one man's sufficiency may be another man's excess, or one man's fasting another man's temptation. Believing this, and seeing that the New Testament does not treat the body as evil, and, while laying down positive law as to the duty of literal fasting does not lay down positive law or definition as to the mode and extent of the duty, seeing that Christianity as a religion is distinguished in this respect from other systems, I should yet, on the other hand, be only the more scrupulous to put myself in mind that the keeping under of the body is one of the foremost obligations of the

Christian priesthood; that this voluntary yoking appertains to every portion of our being, imagination and desire, ambition and will, as well as outward acts; and that no purgation needful to this discipline should be counted too severe. In the words of one who has wisely counselled many in our calling, "It is undeniable that the Gospel makes it a duty to keep the body in a subordinate place, in subjection to the soul, in perpetual obedience and fitness to be the holy witness of all spiritual actions." This law flows out of the supreme central fact of the Incarnation—our Lord taking our flesh upon Him that our bodies may be made clean by His body, and our blood by His blood. "We perceive at once that there is a pampering of the flesh which is inconsistent with a holy life. There must be some subjugation of the lower part in order to keep it from that horrid inversion in which appetites and passions acquire dominancy. All habits of real self-indulgence are to be broken up. We form in our better moments the ideal of a life in which character

is produced by moderation, temperance, reserve in things lawful, frugality, the cutting off of pleasures which are seducing or in any degree enslaving." The vessels being earthen, we are liable to lower our vocation and enfeeble our moral power by too much relish for what we eat or drink, by talking too much about it, by letting too much be made of it in the ordering of time or work or in displacing serious duties. I should be less than faithful if I did not further express my own conviction that piety and the Church suffer less from excess in food, which nourishes the body, than in narcotic luxuries which certainly do not nourish it. This may be also the place to say that there is a sort of selfishness not generally included in this class of sins, but which I think belongs here. It begets more mischief than would ever be suspected from anything we read, perhaps because some of the laity, moved by an honorable sentiment of shame for a clergyman who is not ashamed of himself, often cover it up and pass it over. I mean the sin of running in debt, need-

lessly and heedlessly, from mere self-pleasing and lack of conscience. No man, whatever his gifts or his devotion, can obviate that mischief except by stopping the transgression, and the place to stop it is where it begins. We hear frequent warnings against church debts—none too frequent. But if you knew all there is to be known you would consider as even worse than those the unreasonable, facile, or chronic indebtedness of clergymen in their private affairs, exasperating the irreligious and bringing religion itself into contempt.

From these grosser offences pass on to notice indulgences less carnal, but still very much “of the earth earthy.” There are not many days in a parish priest’s life when he has not some direct occasion to illustrate the spirit of his priesthood; to show that he knows what the Cross he preaches means by putting aside his own tastes or convenience for others. In a very nearly unerring ratio, how much there is of that in his pastoral office, how much prompt giving up,—cheerful and manly and unhesi-

tating,—for the least attractive or agreeable, the least important or influential, the poorest or the worst, so much power and true success he has in the long run. It is striking to see that so deeply is this vicarious idea wrought into human nature itself that even the Christless church of the Positivists, too proud to call what it believes by its Christian name, is yet forced to find room for it in its creed, because God has made so large a place for it in humanity, and calls it altruism.

An exceedingly thoughtful clergyman, eminent before he died, made a practice of writing down in his private diary what he called “homiletical paragraphs.” One day toward the end of December he entered there what he whimsically called a *concio ad me ipsum*. It runs—“The last Lord’s Day of the year has arrived, and on reviewing your labors you must feel you have not stirred up the gift that is in you. Your talent, *qualiscunque sit*, has been too much laid in the napkin. You have bestowed your time and labor on inferior and second-

ary things. One thing is needful. That a man is a minister is no token that he shall not be cast into hell fire." Elsewhere he writes—"The young minister who is evidently concentrating his chief thoughts on something other than his ministry will be a drone if not a Demas. He must very likely lay his account to forego some part of that reputation which comes from erudition and literature. Leighton said to some one who admired his books, 'One devout thought outweighs them all.' Look not at the quietude, respectability, or refining culture, but at the lifelong embassy from the Redeemer for lost men. There are legitimate occasions when a minister may thoroughly relax his mind, and I hope you will despise the sanctimonious prescriptions of those who would debar clergymen from any summer repose or resort to springs or seaside. Nevertheless in the ordinary ministerial day there should be no hour not devoted to something helpful toward the great work. Such are the discouragements of a genuine cross-bearing ministry that,

without the Master's own spirit of sacrifice sooner or later, the dilettante pulpiteer will throw off the burden and begin to seek his ease, or else preach for itching ears or phonographic reporters." It will require no very strenuous or heroic spirit to go acceptably enough through most of your public services; but it is hard to toil without visible returns; to see your most sacred endeavors coarsely handled; to find spiritual things profanely criticised; to spend wretched hours cheerfully among ignorant, unclean, petulant, gossiping, weak-minded people. Nothing that I know of will carry one graciously and gladly through that but the Christ in his heart.

I say *graciously*: for in all charities between person and person, how much depends on the manner! and may not Christ be in the manner as well as in the heart? It impresses me very much that the larger number of complaints which a Bishop is obliged to hear made by parishioners against their spiritual guides are of this character—complaints not of gigantic or

damning iniquities, fraud or drunkenness or adultery or blasphemy—but of sharp speeches, rough and cruel words, impatience, selfish neglects of the poor or families in humble life, overbearing measures, unkind and ungentle manners. Of course many of these grievances are imaginary, and more of them are too trivial in themselves to be recorded or remembered. But let them accumulate and they form a blemish on the ministerial character. They gradually and silently raise a barrier between the shepherd and his flock. *That* shepherd is not giving his life for the sheep. His fine discourse neither comforts nor persuades. The pastoral tie is weakened. The people do not say lovingly in their hearts, This man cares for us for Jesus' sake.

It is hard, undoubtedly, when you are in the midst of a train of unusually productive thought in your study, which has come slowly and by hard pulling of many hours, where you feel as if interruption would be overthrow, to hear the knock or bell that snaps the thread short off, and summons

you to listen to the incoherent, stammering story of some "foolish body" who may not indeed have said in her heart that there is no God, but precisely because she believes in her heart that there is a God, has come to you to get you tell her what God is doing with her, and how He can be a father to her and to her children when their earthly father is a monster: it *is* hard, and it is one of those hardships which you will not find the average citizen or the popular lecturer or the *Saturday Review* likely to mention when they are flippantly discussing the trials or the failures of the clerical profession. But if you can meet it gallantly, nay more, if you can pass from your books and writing-table to this poor woman, crying out of the coasts of her Tyre on your parish circuit, with anything like the look or tone of Him who stopped and listened whenever Jew or Gentile beggar besought Him, you will be quite as certain to appear among His priests and kings hereafter as if you had finished out your "happy train of thought" in the handsomest fashion, and

gruffly told the perplexed parishioner at your door to go away and come again at a more convenient season. It *is* hard to see your best days for study cut to pieces or frittered away; but one of the most efficient city ministers that this country has produced, who had a great deal of that sort of grief to bear, used to say, "Always tell me if any one calls to see me; the man that wants to see me is the man that I want to see." It *is* hard to ride over a mountain in a storm of a dark night to give the comfortable sacrament to a rich man's servant and then be left to pay the hire of the horse you drove, unthanked; but there is no evidence that St. Paul had hard thoughts of Pagan masters for not transporting him to and fro when he visited their slaves, or ever mentioned it to Priscilla and Aquila. It *is* hard to be addressed by a noisy, impudent upstart in your parish as if you were a huckster; but if you can so manage your temper and face and voice as to let him or others feel that you belong to an order of silent victors, taking their strength from

Him who walked on in majesty when the rabble cried "Crucify Him," and who stood unmoved to be spit upon, you really cannot much regret your opportunity. When we get well up above our little irritations and disputes we have momentary perceptions at least of how grand it would be if all of us, officers of the great King, went through our drudgeries with that easy swing of conscious "power from above" which is as far from petulance as it is from fear.

In the ordination office, where it is set forth "to how high a dignity and how weighty an office and charge" a priest is called, you notice that the title "watchman" is in a group with two others, and that they are in a certain order—messengers, watchmen, stewards. Then follows an explication, where teaching and premonishing are mentioned first, and the busy missionary service of seeking and bringing in sheep that are scattered abroad is named afterward, not as a duty of a separate class merely, but as belonging in its degree to every Presbyter ordained—"feeding and

providing for the Lord's family" not being omitted. The meaning is that no part of the holy office is rightly discharged without the others, and especially that to be a persuasive messenger one must be a stirring seeker and a tireless worker. In the early Church the exposition or homily was joined, through the Gospel and Epistle for the day, to the Eucharistic celebration. Quite as palpable is the bond in the primitive system between the preaching and the out-of-door travel and everyday visiting of the sacred shepherds. There comes a temptation, however, which nothing but self-sacrifice will overcome. Late at night you are in a well-lighted and comfortable "study." Outside, the weather is forbidding. You sophisticate with yourself. You say, "To be sure, over the mountain yonder, or out on the marsh, or down in the slums, there is a sick woman whose baby has scarlet fever and is said not to have been baptized; there is a smart hack-driver who has lately stopped drinking, and beating his wife, and I told her I would come

this evening and help her encourage him; there are some orphan children that may or may not have bread in the morning; there are two or three confirmation candidates that I should not be so likely to find at any other time; there is that contumacious vestryman who has got hold of a bit of parish gossip, and got hold of it, as usual, wrong-end first, and will make more trouble with it in twenty-four hours than I can set right in a month unless I see him; and there is Nora, the washerwoman, who is starving for want of work, and she ought to know about the place I heard of to-day, and so make sure of it to-morrow. But no! They can wait. I have here a capital subject for an uncommonly interesting sermon. Somebody has told me that my special talent lies in the pulpit, and I half think so myself. There will be several hundred people in the church, and they are of more account than half-a-dozen uncultivated minds in the outskirts. Preaching is a divine ordinance, and must be attended to at any rate. I shall be excused if I sit here

and write." Of the effect of that dastardly sophistry on the man's own soul or its salvation I am not now to speak. What is the judgment passed upon it by the Apostolic Ministry? St. Peter might have reasoned in the same way if he had chosen, in his room at the house of Simon, the tanner, by the seaside at Joppa. What I desire you to realize is that the sermon you make under those conditions is a sham, as you are a sham, and that God does not use shams for any permanent or glorious upbuilding of His Kingdom anywhere. Just how he will insert debility and failure into your ministry you may never know. It is enough to know "he cannot deny himself." Shirk your pastoral work, your humane work, your work of love, for the sake of your preaching, and you sap your preaching at its root. It was a pathetic but pungent satire of a dying lady, poor but polite to the last, who was asked *in extremis* if her clergyman should be sent for: "No, I thank you, I think not; he has never been to see me in these six years since I moved into the

parish, and it would be a little awkward to have the ceremony of an introduction to my acquaintance just as I am breathing my last." Quite as good was the remark of an older person on her minister's habits: "Six days of the week he is invisible, and the seventh he is incomprehensible." The "invisible" goes to account for the "incomprehensible."

Another form of self-sacrifice, suggested in some of the allusions already made, is a voluntary restraint imposed from Christian principle on self-will. A serious difficulty arises here in discriminating between a righteous determination to adhere to a chosen course against unjustifiable opposition or to maintain an independent stand against conflicting parties, on the one hand, and a stiff adherence to such a course or position because they are ours, and because our pride and consistency are involved in them, on the other. Conscience and will reside in a very near neighborhood to one another in some men's natures. We walk between two perils. One traitor sells his

Master for silver, or favor, or comfort; another gets angry, deceives himself, sees in every opponent an enemy of God, and imagines he is serving Christ when he is only having his own way. It would be interesting if we could lay down on one side those parochial disasters which have come about by a rector's surrendering right for policy, and on the other side those where he has fought fatally for a prejudice or a prerogative. It appears to be greatly for the clearing up of our doubt and for the rectitude of our souls, as well as for the justice and safety of our actions in such cases, if we can wait awhile, and keep asking, from day to day or hour to hour, "How much of this zeal is for God, how much for myself?" Time and this scrutiny will both help us. God will help us through them. There was once a large religious community where various interests were represented under a wise head. Three members fell into a jealous contention. It was a quarrel for official precedence. The matter had to be referred to the presiding officer. It was

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expected without a question that he would assign the coveted post of honor to some one of the three. I have so often felt his judgment to be applicable to a large class of our familiar dissensions that I quote from it: "The question raised among the three persons mentioned in your letter proves too plainly that they have all as yet made but little progress in the school of Jesus Christ. When the Disciples were guilty of disputing who should have the preëminence they were still untaught in the lessons of His humility, and had not fully received the outpourings of His grace. We who are so ready to speak of the spirit of Christ, and are called to spread abroad the sweet odor of His meekness among men, are utterly without excuse if we tolerate in ourselves such unworthiness. We ought to blush at any symptom thereof. If we judge our relative gifts ourselves, or take to ourselves the glory of them, we are guilty of encroachment on His divine judgment and forestall His sentence. In accordance with this principle, binding on all Christians, I

can only condemn all the three partakers in this disagreement. Every power committed to us by God is to be used for the advancement of grace, not of self-will. If any one of our members seek to take the lowest place in the Gospel Feast, we may fairly say to him in Christ's own words, 'Friend, come up higher.' But it is otherwise with those who affect superiority. All such we would send to learn of St. Paul what was the mind that was in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God made Himself of no reputation, and thought it no indignity to His Godhead to bear with and even to seek out all the humiliations of life. I beg all those persons who have had thoughts so opposed to the Christian and still more to the priestly mind, to repent heartily, and to spend a week in special devotions to the humiliations of Jesus Christ. I would have them consider that they are both Christians and priests, and that they ought to esteem these honors more highly than any other title or rank." St. Paul lays down for us, after a stern rebuke of per-

sonal and partisan strifes, the law and the motive of all self-sacrifice in our mutual relations: "Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good for edification:—for even Christ pleased not Himself."

We may follow this law of self-denial into a region of questions more subtle and perhaps more perplexing. What if I, as a teacher, rector, priest, should find myself holding some exceptional views on some question of belief or practice more or less in debate, views which, if I were known to hold them, might bring me under suspicion or even into trouble with my parish or Bishop? They are views which some persons share with me; there may be a school or party interested in them; I care enough about them to wish to promote them; they constitute a "cause"; in that cause there is a certain fascination. Other feelings, then, are enlisted than that of simple loyalty to the Saviour. Then there will evidently be a temptation to duplicity. Toward my Brethren, toward my Bishop, toward a part of my congregation, toward some clear and

strong soul that I am afraid of, I might use concealment. Keeping back what others have a right to know, doing what I should be called to account for if it were known, and doing it from private fancy or party-spirit or self-will, I am first a coward and then a deceiver. Let me call your earnest attention, gentlemen, to the poisonous influence which at this point may threaten the soul's health. It is unspeakably worse than the mere holding or avowing of any honest opinion could be. The first yielding to it is one step toward something pernicious. What self-sacrifice requires in the case is immediate and unreserved candor. A clergyman who carries about that sort of secret with him, equivocating, giving unreal reasons or evasive explanations, carries in his breast perilous stuff. He may go very reverently to God's altar, but he goes with something very like a lie in his right hand. He may make clean the cup and platter of ceremony, but he bears away a stain on his heart. Beware of the faintest beginnings of devotional duplicity.

There remains yet another set of relations where the spirit of the Cross finds occasion for a most careful and delicate exercise—the relations of the clergy with one another as fellow-stewards; not only members of the same profession, but far more than that, workers together under the same Chief Shepherd.

There are different ways of looking at this mutual tie. One is the world's way, or the political way, contemplating rights rather than duties, watching against intrusion rather than for occasions for generosity, more anxious to get what the law of the Digest allows than to fulfil the law of love. It would express itself after this manner: "As the head of a parish I am a legal officer; as having a living to get and my way to make in the world I must be on the lookout for my dues, my reputation, my opportunities. My clerical Brethren are in a certain sense my competitors; if our neighborhood is very close, it may be that what they get I lose—hearers, support, popularity, success. They have the same protection

and the same chance that I have. Let us all take care of ourselves." What type of Christian character this doctrine reveals, what spiritual tone in a spiritual order, and what estimation of it is made by shrewd observers, need not be said. There is certainly another way. The question with you now is which way you will take. I think our clergy, over and beyond personal attachments, love and respect one another. There may be no bitterness, no malice, no intentional injustice. Can we say there is no evil speaking? There is a great deal of it. We of this profession are of a critical habit. As students we are trained to criticism as an art. There are few ways in which self-complacency encourages itself more agreeably than by comparisons of one's own work with the work of others, pointing out blemishes and mistakes that appear along the same line of effort with our own. Then it is a fashion of the whole community to discuss the minister. He is the only man who, two or three times every week, stands up in the eyes of several hun-

dred people who are in the habit of talking together, and exhibits before them his personal endowments. Like the medical, the clerical is a profession talked about. It exercises gifts and deals with subjects which everybody thinks he understands. There is abundant opportunity for comparison of merits. As we are placed, subject to this publicity, with an unparalleled tax on the power of the brain, generally dependent on a measure of public favor for any degree of success, exposed to the utter unscrupulousness of domestic and social gossip, I think we are severely tried. If a majority of the people had sense and religion enough to lay the principal stress on the devotional element of the church service, or even on those traits of a faithful and godly clergyman which are commonly attainable, the case would be better. Yet here we are, Providence with us, the promises ours, the work itself glorious with the glory of our Lord. How will you treat that great temptation to professional jealousy and disparagement? Will you fall in with the bad custom, or

will you establish a custom of magnanimity? Will you condescend to that contemptible gossip about other clergymen's talents or want of them, their foibles, their blunders, their laughable idiosyncrasies? Will you swell the stream of this exceedingly small talk with all its hurtful and cruel ingredients, or will you check it? Will you make it your habit when you speak of a Brother to speak what is true and good only? In the frequent prostration of our hearts before God when we hear the "Ye who do truly," and in opening these hearts frankly to one another, ought we not to accuse ourselves and make new resolutions? How often some clergyman, for the most part irreproachable, without the least intention to be calumnious or even unfriendly, when he has taken charge of a parish vacated only just before, says to his Bishop: "I am trying to do something here, but I have found matters in a wretched condition—disorder and neglect everywhere, families not visited, children not looked up, slovenly services, some persons alienated, records imperfect,

all at loose ends; but I shall try to straighten it out after awhile, only give me time." Now, that is a species of detraction. If all the facts are not just as they are stated it is slander, and the slandered brother is not there to defend himself; even if they are, the manly thing is to go silently to work to mend and make and edify, and in due time the reformation will appear, and you will not lose one jewel in your crown. The oddest part of it is that this same doleful account has been known to be given of the same parish time after time through a series of short settlements, till one marvels how it happens that through such a succession of ruins the parish should not have perished outright, or else through such a succession of improvements should not have become a prodigy of perfection; whereas to outside observation it appears to be neither much better nor much worse at any time than the parishes all around it. It is very seldom that a rector taking charge cannot say with some truth, if he wants to say it, "Other men labored, and I have entered into their

labors." We belittle ourselves by little judgments; may God forgive us! May He give you such heavenly grace that out of all your sore battles with self—self-indulgence, self-admiration, self-pleasing, self-will, self-praise, you may come conquerors and more than conquerors, bringing with you in fruitful abundance, "that most excellent gift of charity, the very bond of peace and of all virtues, without which whosoever liveth is counted dead!"

Almost afraid, my young Brethren, to say to you as of myself those more general and lofty counsels into which I feel that we ought to rise as this short series of instructions draws to an end, I borrow two or three brief passages from a venerable and saintly mind of two hundred years ago. "Let us be content to hide ourselves in God, until, at our Lord Jesus Christ's last coming, all things are revealed. Let us freely give Him this world and all that is in it, if He will but give us Heaven. The day will come when He will show that those who have been most prominently seen in

His work have not always done the most; and sometimes they who are the least worthy receive most credit in this life, because in His wisdom He does not choose that His faithful servants should run the risk of having their reward here. It is well to be content to be forgotten ourselves, so that through us God alone may dwell in the hearts of men. If we give ourselves heartily to our dear Lord, entering into the spirit of His Incarnation, then, without losing anything of that original attitude, we shall go forth as He came forth from the Father. We shall apply ourselves to earthly matters, hearken to the words of imperfect men, learn their languages, and accept rather with patience than with self-seeking or complacency such application to secular studies as is needful for God's glory. But in order to do this in holiness, and according to the mind of Christ, we must give ourselves wholly to Him, entreating Him to keep us free from the spiritual infirmities which beset those much given to literary pursuits. Our aim must be to live the sim-

ple life of faith, ruling our conduct by our duties, not by our feelings. The real necessity for us in spiritual things is that we should be busy in doing, not in looking about to see whether we are doing or not. Above all things, we must walk before God with truth, with a single mind. The smallest actions done for God tend to our sanctification. He tells us that it is so. Never pause to dwell on what you may feel in yourself, of weakness or of strength, but live on in that simple faith without squandering your energies or analyzing your emotions. Do not imagine yourself to be weak because you feel weak, or strong because you feel strong. St. Peter believed himself to be strong, but was weak; St. Paul believed himself to be weak, though he was strong. You cannot be free except 'the Son shall make you free.' Without Him you can do nothing. We are not sufficient to think anything as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God."

"Without Me ye can do nothing." Let that be the word we all carry away with

us, dear friends, and keep with us to the end—a word of warning, a word of Almighty promise! Let us all say it back to Him here, this moment, with our whole heart, from the depths of penitence and humility, and so say it to the end—Without Thee, O Christ, we can do nothing!

These days of comparative seclusion, in this Seminary life, are passing away. When you have once begun your august work, the most blessed refreshments you come to will be but Elims, short intervals between seas and deserts, between march and march, between things behind to be forgotten and things before to be attained. What is done for you here, what you do for yourselves, will all be revealed. It will not save you. It may be easily thrown away, or lost. Will those you shall minister to, the souls in your cure, see any mark of the cross upon you, any sign in your bearing, conversation, preaching, priesthood, life, that you have been taught by the Son of God? Will those you live with see

it? Will those eyes which are never dimmed and never err see it?

The everlasting Love be patient with us, giving you already the power of an endless life, while you look for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ!

IV.

THE MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH A MINISTRY
FROM ON HIGH.

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WE assume it to be impossible to exercise the priestly office thoroughly or to sustain the prophetic character consistently without a distinct apprehension of the unseen world as a "world," not an abstraction but a palpable domain peopled. The effectual priest, the enlightening and inspiring prophet, look up steadfastly into a scene of living realities, and so look into it that they see it opening down into the world of realities about them. They live in vital relations with it. It becomes consciously a source of their strength and a secret of their peace in all their ministries. What meets them there is more than ideas or names, images of the mind or creations of its faculty. In whatever degree their service might be, honest or useful without this sense of its being a ministry from on high,

it would not be, in power or purity, what God has offered to His ministers when He called them to be His servants or His saints.

Like other elements of the Christian Faith this truth has immediate connections with the Incarnation. Christ's coming throws the two worlds open to each other. Each had its existence in preparation before. The Advent removed the screen. The Revelation was more than a book or a "vision." Before the Face of the Son of Man the partition-walls melted away. Thenceforth the Church below and the Church above were to be in intercourse; the officers and guides here were to have their commission, authority, light, and loftier fellowship there. It was to be a prolonged, perpetual revelation. "Henceforth ye shall see Heaven opened." The Ascension is followed by the coming down of gifts; and we are told by what gift-bearers they are brought. The loneliest missionary at the farthest outpost of Christendom has it for his comforting that his companions are "the innumerable company." No discouragement

ments, oppositions, terrors, privations, can sunder this communion. Its satisfactions are beyond the griefs of fruitless toil, the jangle of quarreling shepherds, the alarms of heresy, the shame of backsliders and traitors. While as ministers we are engaged about our hallowed work, it matters little whether the "audience" is more or less. The invisible witnesses are there. They worship with us, and we with them. It is an incalculable joy. How insignificant the prattle of query and comment at the church-door,—How many people, or how few, were there!

In its practical habit the human mind has never been held very long, or on any large scale, in the rare atmosphere of a Platonic theism. It will run rather to one of two delusions, mythology or materialism. Imagination or the senses will avenge the wrong of slighted faith. Within the limits of a nominal Christianity the two tendencies appear,—to a loose fanaticism that makes an easy alliance with appetite and passion, or to the cynical humility of the

agnostic, disclaiming knowledge of Heaven so as to make it easy to escape its laws and laugh at its sanctities. Out of that Heaven descends Christ, declaring that while He is here He is there. With Him, around Him, are disclosed the forms and features of citizens of a heavenly kingdom which thenceforward is to be a kingdom on the earth. He speaks of them and to them as we speak of those we know and love, to our housemates and neighbors,—“fellow-citizens with the saints and of the Household of God.” And He promises to His workmen, watchmen, stewards, messengers, that they shall, if they will, be honored with the same attendants, defended by the same heavenly host, cheered by the same “ministering spirits” that ministered to Him.

Once settled therefore in the belief which sees no Saviour but the Lord Jesus and sees Him continually, adores no God but the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and expects no eternal life but by the sacrifice of the Cross, we are in a position to open our eyes on all the wondrous and inspiring array

of supersensual verities which encompass us. We acknowledge with glad assurance, as Catholic piety always has, that "without these," saints and angels, mysteries and powers "from on high" we in this Church of God cannot be "made perfect."

Nor are the two, the personal Saviour by faith in whom we are justified, and the entire supernatural system made known to us in the knowledge and Revelation of Him, to be separated from one another. The great perversions and mischiefs which have arisen under the name of Christianity might probably be shown to have been largely caused by putting them apart altogether, or else by disturbing their proportions to such a degree that, first, doctrine was distorted and then, as must always happen sooner or later, personal character was deformed. The two are parts of one whole. The person Christ, the Mediator, cannot be contemplated as detached either from the heavenly places and living activities out of which He descended, or from the vast and mighty stream of divine forces and influences which

were concerned in the purpose of His coming and became manifest when He was manifested. How otherwise could we account for the cast of the narrative, not only the coloring and allusions of the New Testament story but the express recitals and averments, the scenery spread before us, the superhuman forms presented to us? Is it not remarkable that, in the beginning of the Epistle to the Hebrews, where our Lord's divinity is affirmed with a majesty and explicitness of statement scarcely surpassed in the proem of the Gospel of St. John, the preparatory promises of redemption are represented as made in the presence of celestial orders, the Father enthroned in the midst of a peopled universe beholding the ranks about Him and recognizing the Son as sharing the seat of His sovereignty? Two of the evangelists preface their biographical records of the Messiah with particular accounts of persons passing and speaking beyond the bounds of space and time which we call Nature. From the Annunciation to the Ascension we stand be-

fore opened heavens. Such is the naturalness of the supernatural that most Christians of every period, in reading Holy Scripture, have felt no more surprise at the mention of a messenger from another world appearing near the Son of God, or in some Apostolic exigency, than at any other Biblical occurrence.

Yet we now meet large numbers and even bodies of Christians to whose religious ideas and emotions all this higher-world life is foreign. Are there not modern multitudes from whose convictions and associations, and even their sacred seasons and devout communings, it all lies off, not exactly denied but as something legendary or apparitional? Cherubim and Seraphim, all the company of Heaven, are sung about, but regarded as only the machinery of a poem to be treated as the critics treat the epic supernaturalism of Dante and Milton. Has all this no effect on practical piety, on worship, on the ministry of the Church? When the living glories have vanished from the skies or fled beyond them, leaving nothing there

but soulless spheres about which science disputes whether their frosts and fires permit any life at all to be in them, when everything above the Andes and Himalayas, and above the human head, is stripped of all intelligence but the Creator's, though countless grades and shapes of life run thick all the way down to the monad, will nothing be lost and missed from the spiritual part of man himself, or from the spiritual power and efficiency of the priesthood and prophecy, of Christ's appointment? We see increasing signs of a too terrestrial Gospel, and hence of a Church that is less of Heaven than of earth. Little by little, faith is frost-bitten. Everything is begrudged except mental adventure, self-reliance and doubt. One or another doctrine of the creed is rationalized. At last Jesus Himself is followed rather as a leader and reformer of the race, the manliest of men, operating only after the human manner of influence, than as the Eternal Son "begotten not made," the Lamb of God taking away the sin of the world as well as turning its night into day.

Social science cries "Behold the Man" with Pilate, not "My Lord and my God" with believing Thomas. Some beauty of holiness, some power of prayer, some tenderness of spiritual sensibility, will be lacking where this mortal life becomes more and more, and the other life less and less. What if this secular tendency creeps to the pulpit and the altar, subtly infecting the guardians and teachers sent from on high to lift men's conversation heavenward? Why should we resort eagerly to a critical and exegetical apparatus as uncertain as anything in empirical or experimental inquiry to get rid of what the human heart, after all, in its great hunger, so craves that poets bring it back, childhood is born to it, and saints grow in it as they grow old and grow wise? We shall do better—how much better!—to live and worship, go about our daily work, rise up and lie down, as those who have "come unto Mt. Zion, the city of the Living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the firstborn which

are written in Heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant."

It has been observed that in Religion the thought of the East and the thought of the West start from opposite points and move in opposite directions, the Oriental mind conceiving of God as coming down to man, the Western mind of man as struggling up by meditation, prayer and discipline toward God. However this may be, an actual difference appears between two systems of religious culture and two corresponding styles of the religious life. Why has God spoken in the Gospel and the Church? Our answer is, To show us Himself, His Law and Love, His Will and Purpose, a Revelation of His character. Another answer is that Christianity is given to show men what they ought to be, how they ought to live and may expect to live forever, in safe conditions and in all their relations. The great Reality is dealt with on its divine side or its human side. We may busy ourselves either

with what we have to do, or with what the Eternal One has done, is doing and promises to do. So it is quite possible to regard the Christian Society as prospective, the ideal reign of righteousness to be wrought out by human agencies and gradual improvements and to become heavenly only in a future age and state, or otherwise to expect a spiritual commonwealth set up here where the living forces of a real Heaven above us are already in active, ordered and perpetual play, forces which we gain and serve by looking upward into a world where the Perfect Will is done by an obedient creation, where Father, Son and Holy Ghost work "hitherto" and evermore, where law is love, and out of which powers, helps, inspirations, influences, unseen but mighty, actual as any solids or attractions of the globe, pass down into believing hearts to renew and quicken them, to purify them and lift them up. Is it not a matter of unspeakable moment to the Christian man and woman, to the messenger of Eternal Life most of all, whether there is such a

world as that or not; whether we believe in it or not; whether we live as if we believed in it or not?

Without doubt, there is at present in the popular mind, spoken or unspoken, this answer:—That world of unseen personal life, if actual at all, lies apart from our practical interests and our appointed work where we are now. What is wanted of men, it is insisted, is visible usefulness. We are on the human plane, and we have a plenty to do here; what other plane there may be is a matter of speculation. Whether there is an “immaterial” sphere or not, is immaterial to us. The Spirit we believe in is “the spirit of the age.”

That objection, however, is only a phase of a larger issue, involving, as I believe, the fact of Religion, the source of character, the definition of what is practical, and the limits of human power, as well as the authority of the Bible and the Church, and not less at last our moral integrity in continuing to use words and perform acts which mean that we believe in that au-

thority. What is of man tends powerfully to crowd upon and finally to crowd out what is from above man. Fixing attention here on the notion that, as an element in Christian character, faith in the superhuman is impractical, we appeal not to theory but to history and biography, *i. e.*, to fact. The Church has its commemorative literature, its All Saints' Day, its Martyrology, its Hagiology, and its living representatives, throughout Christendom, of the Faith of Christ, if the Faith of Christ is a thing to be defined and identified. Studying this evidence, shall we be led to any such conclusion as that righteousness on the earth suffers from a conscious communion with the Spirits in Heaven; that the kingdom of Christ loses energy or the fruit of good works by a sense of immediate relation to a Heavenly Society, or that the signal leaders of the civilized forces of society have been less in stature or in power for ascribing their strength to palpable influences coming down to them from beyond the fields of their action and their understanding? Take

for instance the figure of the Reformer who nearly 800 years ago arose in the confusion and semi-barbarism of western Europe, and has stood ever since as the delivering and directing mind in that perilous age of the life of the Church, St. Bernard,—of whom an English Protestant historian says that he was “at once the leading and the governing Head of Christendom,” and whom a very different authority, Baronius, who ended his Ecclesiastical annals with the period which Bernard created and fashioned, describes as “the ornament and support of the whole Catholic Church and preëminently the honor, glory and joy of the Church in France.” Is it easy to name a master-workman more sagacious, a ruler more mindful and more skilful in every detail of management and administration, more shrewd or comprehensive in planning or more direct and prompt and untiring in executing every economy save war, more admired and trusted in affairs, more influential among statesmen, more feared in courts? Has there been, since St. John and St. Paul, a believer, a

theologian, a preacher, a saint, more thoroughly and ardently intimate than he with Persons beyond the annals of time and space and the powers of the world to come than this devotee or Churchman? Is this practical? Hear, then, this passage, found in the first volume of his works: "The land which the soul of the saint inhabits is not a land of forgetfulness. Brethren, the amplitude of Heaven does not contract the heart but dilates it. Even those superior Spirits who have dwelt in Heaven from the beginning, do they, because inhabiting Heaven, look with disdain upon the earth? Do they not rather visit and frequent it? Does affection fail in their Unity because they see always the face of the Father? Rather are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister to those who have the heirship of salvation? Shall angels go abroad and succor men and not know how to sympathize with us?" So real to him was this intercourse with the celestial sphere that, as it is reported of him, one day when his vision of divine things was un-

usually clear, he rode from morning till evening along the shore of Lake Geneva, and at nightfall did not know that the water with its surpassing beauty and marvelous reflections had been in sight.

We must believe there can be no strong or successful "church-work" except through a conformity of mind to the settled spiritual laws. Our Lord must have spoken not only of the continuity but of the principles and methods of the service when He admonished His followers, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." If there is a prevalent decay of the highest type of saintly living, that is of holy living, it must come from a loss, conscious or otherwise, of faith in the supernatural verities of the New Testament, verities without which there certainly is no New Testament. It should not be deemed presumptuous to confess a conviction, in view of all the past, that the future advance if not the preservation of what we know as Christianity depends on a healthy revival of that faith, as against a base materialism on

the one hand and a loose popular compound of serious individualism and a shallow subjective sentimentalism on the other. The latter alone might keep a hold on a certain class without belief in any personal existence intermediate between man and his maker. But let that faith in a superhuman kingdom, a sphere of which God is Creator and Centre, but including also superhuman beings besides Him with superhuman ministries belonging to them, die out however gradually or silently, and the whole fabric of our Christian worship, as to its language and form, is thenceforth a solemn unreality. Unreality in the name of piety is the beginning of death to piety and morality both, as our day needs to remember. Except so far as the faith in question has been kept in the Church Catholic it has been sliding out at the pressure of a hard, impatient and irreverent rationalism, for three or four generations. This decadence would be less admonitory than it is if there were not reason to apprehend that the same tendency threatens the Body where the notes of Catholicity

remain. Of course, unorganized piety will continue to exist, man being a religious creature by constitution, even where the Divine System is disused or misunderstood, as a moving body will run on after the motive-power has been detached or has ceased to act. But it is a slackening and expiring movement. If that belief ebbs away, then Scriptures, creed, anthems, become the perishing signs of a pretence, surviving if at all not by their inherent vitality but by a mere conservative habit or prudential instinct.

The terms "natural" and "supernatural" are used for convenience as signifying sufficiently what is meant to be conveyed. Till rather recently their correctness has scarcely been questioned. Discussions of the nature of miracle and its evidential value have turned attention to the limits of that which both physical and theological science have known as nature and its laws, the query arising whether miracle itself may not lie within those limits. Assuming nature to include the whole visible field of divine

operation, miracle becomes only one of its forms. Accepting, for instance, the supreme fact of the Incarnation it might be said that nothing could be more strictly natural than that the Son of God, coming forth out of the heavenlies, should be accompanied throughout His earthly ministry by a manifestation of powers, events and living beings not belonging to the scene in which we now live. To a wide and high vision of the universe there would be a fitness in such a harmony of the inner and outer worlds and their economics as would at once raise reverence and satisfy the mind. The Evangelical truths, so far as they pertain to human life here and hereafter, have their countersigns on the face of the earth and sky and sea. Something more than their analogues or likenesses is in their phenomena, and in the structure of their organizations. So the most penetrating intellects and finest generalizations have discovered. The grand prophetic voices have proclaimed the secret. The unity of which seers have been sure is a oneness not only of systems,

races, nations, beliefs, but of the seen universe with the unseen. We must admit the imperfection of language as a medium of thought or as an instrument of treating divine mysteries, much more as a means of communication from the Infinite Spirit. Happily in its actual use it answers its purpose. The words "supernatural" and "superhuman" may continue to serve interchangeably without much misunderstanding.

It is asked, perhaps, why take pains to reaffirm this supernatural element in our Faith just now? Because there is so much to show that the entire matter, in religious bodies with which we are conversant, has dropped so amazingly out of mind. There would be a startling disclosure, it seems to me, if a sharp analytical cross-examination were had of what is called by courtesy the Scriptural and Evangelical Orthodoxy still holding the Bible in its hand, as to its real belief in an open Heaven, in an angelic world, in substantial living forces playing over steadily from the unseen spheres, good

and bad, to influence our life here, and in the communion of saints. With some guiding minds that lead that way the steps are so soft and slow as to be well-nigh imperceptible. One gets tired of sermons and religious books which treat religion only on its human side, (and are popular for that reason,) from which the great supernatural verities are banished. They starve and dwarf the spiritual life, substituting self-reliance for reverence, self-satisfaction for humility, and egotistical noise for silence with God. It is one thing to keep an Article in the traditional forms of our belief, letting it lie there as we let disused furniture lie in a garret; and another thing to believe it. We Churchmen make much of the Apostles' Creed: but do we hold the intermediate Articles as vitally and definitely as we hold the first one and the last? We have a Michaelmas in the Calendar; but a good many seem hardly to know what to do with it. If the Bible is the religion of Protestants, then picking and choosing in the Bible is hardly for Protestants a religious

employment. Open the Book at any page you will, you read but a little way before you meet some messenger from beyond the stars and suns. Interwoven with all the story of things and persons and nations earthly, runs, like warp in woof, another story, just as vivid, plain, positive, conspicuous, just as free from strain or uncertainty or artifice,—a story of the Heavenly. These personages are part of a most actual scenery; they are met in common houses and streets, at tent doors, by the banners of armies, in solitudes of deserts and in market-places, by camp-fires and in the noonday sun. They appear in biography and prophecy, in history and psalm. There is no crevice where you can run in your critical knife between nature and the supernatural, in the writing, in the web of events, any more than you can draw a visible line between the visible earth and sky. "He maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire." There they are, you Bible Christian! When Christ is to appear in flesh and be born,

these visitants announce His Advent, move about His mother, and talk with her. A full chorus of them shake this earthly air with their hymn. They are never far from Him. As they were a necessary part of the envoy of His Incarnation, they answer His call, and having done His bidding, disappear. They guard His sepulchre after He has risen. They attest the special miracles of His Apostles. The New Testament, to the end, never forgets them. In every quarter where you would expect to find any light on spiritual facts, you behold a spiritual world, peopled with organized life, open, and kindred to our own.

We have our refreshments when we need them. Failing in the ministry, and as we very often think, laboring to little purpose, the dry soul has her refreshment, and we are able to hold on our way.

Practical materialism being the spiritual pestilence of our time, faithful workmen and witnesses must be anxious to secure to themselves every provision of spiritual health. Materialism is not to be associated

altogether with coarse sensualities, high feeding and hard drinking and florid living. It goes with calculating and enterprising brains and a fastidious culture. Materialism may fast and keep vigils for a prouder fortune, for an ampler store of knowledge, for a larger draught of the nectar of mortal delight. Not even do men build and spin and traffic and travel in the lower sphere, but even their least sordid ambitions find an exhilarating impulse and a splendid career far on this side of eternal things. Materialism invites the masters of art, the kings of commerce and the captains of industry to its table, and they all sit down together, saying no grace.

Granted that the popular religion of the day may speak of other satisfactions. It does this. The popular religion ornaments its temples, rings its bell, preaches its discourses. It even summons two venerable witnesses, the Bible and Sunday ; testifies sincerely, and it may be eloquently, to a past redemption, an ethical righteousness and a post-mortem salvation, telling its "audi-

ences" that Christianity is a developed adjunct of secular education. What wonder if it does more for the schoolhouse than the sanctuary, and instructs tempted men and women that they are to make themselves good just as they make themselves knowing or famous, by their own will-power on the human plane? What if they are bidden to go back as far for the Saviour and His kingdom as for their Greek textbooks and beyond the grave for an open Heaven? What if the best outlook of a Christian is to feel and to fight, unvisited of the heavenly host in this life and try to get into a better by and by? What if the visible and invisible domains are kept as far apart as Brahm from the Indian hut, or Olympus from the Athenian agora? What if the "Communion of Saints" is a sentimental exaggeration, the empty echo of an antique superstition, the "Kingdom of Heaven" not being of Heaven at all, but only a frame of our better moods and happier experiences? How could we marvel then if this "religion" should prove to be

either a fugitive and intermittent possession or an improved moral philosophy formed on New Testament maxims, and our "Christian walk" a kind of half-evangelized decorum instead of an open-eyed and steadfast march looking up ever with a *sursum corda* gladness into that which is within the veil, or sitting already in "heavenly places" with St. Paul, having the daily life close-knit and "hid with Christ in God"?

It is easy to find fault. But if the fault is really there we had better find it, or else it will find us, and we shall starve because we will not "look unto the hills," and faint because we will not fill our pitchers from the upper springs. Must it not animate us to know of the nearness of a Home of boundless Love? And love is never an abstraction. Love is personal. If Love lifts us, it is above us. There is no self-elevation. The saving strengths, the regenerating waters, stir "from on high." "Ye are from beneath, I am from above." When He says "Ye" He means all of us, yet in the "natural" life and under its rule.

When He says "I" He takes in with Him the entire sum of His recovering and redeeming powers, His life, sacrifice, church, ministry, sacraments, intercession. The movement reaches down, opens out, lays hold, seizes soul by soul, unfolds its gracious mysteries, gathers fishermen and scholars, publicans and Pharisees, slaves and monarchs, little children and veteran soldiers, and lo! the kingdom of heaven on the earth has come. The two worlds are opened into one another, and they stand open. We walk on this planet in a glorified landscape and are at home in it. There is more over our heads than below them. Angel-forms are in the air, not a whit the less actual for being invisible. There need be no more doubt about it than when the shepherds saw the shining, and heard the hymn. To a disciple with this most reasonable faith, life can never be tame or commonplace any more. The drudgeries of the hardest lot, the straying flocks in the wildest pasture, to parishioner and pastor, are always in transfiguration. They

are kindred with a household of light without strife or suspicion, or failure, or discouragement, or fear. Every task is better done. The intellectual mastery is firmer and more tranquil. Manliness is manlier, womanhood is lovelier, for this consciousness of celestial relationships, this full and cheerful assurance that we "are come," come already, by the faith and power of the descended and ascended Son of Man, "to the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to God, the Judge of all."

It matters nothing to reply that the individual members of that Superior Society are obscure to sight, that there is no *sensible* intercourse, and that save the Three Ineffable Persons we call on none of them by name. Though I should recognize no particular angel, yet I believe in the angels none the less. I believe in the Syrian people without knowing a Syrian man. It is not Gabriel or Abdiel perhaps that I think of, but there is the great Choir that cry aloud

to their Creator, that I respond to in the *Benedicite*, that I join with in the *Benedic Anima*, and find very near me the ceaseless "Therefore with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven." For one, if I did not so believe, and so warm and feed my faith in all the things declared from on high, I would shut my Bible and my Prayer-book together; I would go to the shelterless tabernacle of the altruists; I would say my *Credo Non* with honest skeptics and repeat the gloomy ritual of downward-looking silence at the graves of those I love.

For it does come to that. It is a singular idea of the Universe,—that except the Deity all the way up above our heads there is no form of personal life. In sheer matter this globe is a speck, of well-nigh unutterable insignificance. Look at an astronomical chart; it hangs a mote in the star-dust of the clouded sky. To limit the numbers and scope of all living things to those that are, or have been or shall be, born and buried in its geologic strata would be very much the rationalism of a thinking insect

that should conclude there are no loftier vital shapes anywhere than those which creep on its particular leaf or filament of moss. Science is insulted by a theory that so dwarfs creation and sterilizes its fields.

“Great God, I had rather be
A pagan, suckled in a creed outworn,
So might I, standing on some pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that might make me less forlorn,
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea,
And hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.”

Creation is a consistent whole. If we see that certain parts of nature not only indicate but prophesy certain other parts for the rational interpretation of their own meaning and for the working of the total plan, then looking from those other parts in the right quarter the eyes of science will be sure to find them. Now the extremes are easy to see,—the lowest form of inorganic matter at the one end, and the Supreme Mind at the other,—for in this line of thought a personal creatorship is assumed. Whereabouts, between these two ends, is man? Beginning at the bottom of

the scale and moving up, whatever may be left uncertain a fact that stands out conspicuous and undisputed after observing the objects individually is the fact of gradation. Things unequal in complexity and capability are yet things in order. The inequality in use or dignity runs in gradually rising degrees from the bottom. Science may be baffled at many a puzzle. She may be driven to conjecture on an hypothesis where she longs to affirm. She may speak, as I have heard her on the lips of one of the most eminent and eloquent of naturalists, with something like impatient disappointment, of her failure to discover, after twenty years of unremitting study of the origin of life, the secret hidden in the egg of a tortoise,—as helpless before that as the egg itself. With her most penetrating analysis she can only see, note, sort and classify; but always the things are in order. Be it by the self-unfolding of an inworking tendency or by the arrangement and addition of a Hand as it were *ab extra*, the sorts are never very far apart. Rank by

rank they mount up toward man. All along, too, as you ascend, you have signs of anticipation, of something beyond, of a loftier kind of creature than you see. A voice out of the rocks, out of the sea, out of the slime of sleepy pools, out of the clefts of the wilderness, out of the eagle's nest at the top of the forest, cries ever "one cometh after me mightier than I." From lowest to highest major and minor prophets foretell Adam and his sons. Given the lowest, the higher must be. To stop short of the highest would be to mutilate deplorably the integrity, the unity, the majesty, of a Creation set in order from the beginning, redeemed by the "Word made flesh."

It would be easy to extend these lines of devout and thankful thought on sure and luminous pathways. Here they are only pointed to as Revelation and Reason open them, for the possible encouragement of some of those Brethren who are either in anxious preparation and discipline for the Sacred Calling, or are in its solemn trials

and august endeavors. For on the flattest and driest plains of daily duty we can "look unto the hills whence cometh our help." Over every valley of despond stretches the Heaven of God. In the Infinite Presence hill and valley are equally near to Him who is the Son of Man, and who wills that where He is there shall His servant be.

V.

THOROUGH SERVICE.

V.

THOROUGH SERVICE.

THE causes of failure in Church work are the same precisely with the causes of failure in house work, shop work, or any other right work that is done in the world—want of conscience, want of energy, want of system, want of patience, want of discipline, want of will—in a word, want of thoroughness. The woman who keeps a well-ordered house will, just because she is orderly, be helpful and efficient in visiting the poor, in the parish guild, the sewing school, the Auxiliary, the Girls' Friendly Society, the sisterhood, the hospital. Slackness and carelessness in the one place will be slackness and carelessness in the other. What we call *character* is one thing, all round the globe; and it has only one root—the perfect life of Christ our Lord ingrafted in the soul.

The question might be asked, how it

happens that special and frequent attention is lately given to the Church work of women rather than of men, and so how we happen to be here this morning. It certainly is not because, in the past, work for the Church has not been done by women, all over the country. In the Diocese where I have charge, including nearly one hundred and fifty congregations, many of them missions yet, but most of them organized parishes having wardens and vestries, both the original Church life and the survival of it from year to year are owing to women. The first services were often called for and held, the places of worship were provided, the comforts and decencies and not merely the decorations were furnished, the money was raised, the church buildings were put up (often very slowly) and the clergy have been paid, by the ingenuity, zeal and toil of women. You will not understand that men have done nothing, or that I undertake to estimate exactly the proportion of credit due to the one sex or the other. I mean that except for the female capacity and

resolution, prudence and sacrifice, which have been actually brought to bear, more than one-half of these flocks would never have been gathered, or would have been scattered and lost. And this statement is not so general but that, taking up the list of parishes, I can put my finger on the names of scores of them that, without this kind of female leadership, would have perished, especially outside of the cities and large towns. Some of you would be entertained at the shape and manner of these volunteer services. I recall the example of one woman, unmarried, who having waited from week to week for some unbusiness-like vestrymen to fulfil their promise, harnessed her father's farm-horse into a lumber-wagon, drove to a village some miles away, and brought home a load of window-sashes for the completion of the chapel.

Why is this not as honorable, as saintly, as what is told in the old legend of St. Marina, the hermit's daughter, who went from the Eastern monastery in the desert with a wagon and oxen to the shores of

the Red Sea to cart supplies for the monks? A wife without property in one place, and the daughter of a farmer in another, each almost entirely alone, not long ago carried successfully through, without debt, the erection of an attractive sanctuary. Nearly every form of industry and economy known to the invention and fingers of maidens and matrons is constantly in use to rear or repair churches, or to keep the doors from being shut. At this moment a band of young girls is prosperously busy in paying off a heavy parish debt, not of their own making, at the rate of several hundred dollars a year. What is true in Central New York is doubtless as true in other parts of the country. It will hardly do then to treat this idea of "woman's work" in the church with surprise, as a recent discovery, or to go into sentiment about it as a fresh experiment, still less to be proud of it anywhere as a local pre-eminence.

In fact, it is out of that somewhat artificial *appearance* of it, which I think the

matter before us is in some danger of putting on, that I take the direction of what I have now to say. Each of us, in one way or another, must tell his own story. If I can be of any use to you at all it is by a frank utterance of convictions which a serious experience has forced into prominence in my mind.

This question respecting woman's work must have come up either because it is found that more of it ought to be done than has been done hitherto, or else because there is an impression that there is some unpublished secret pertaining to it, some mystery in the art of it, or some novelty to be proposed in the method of it. Frankly, then, I tell you that neither by history nor by observation do I find or believe that there is any such thing. You will accomplish solid usefulness, enlarge your range of sympathy, and ennoble your own life wherever in the order of Providence you are living it, you will dignify your womanhood and contribute something satisfactory to the kingdom of Christ and His charity,

not at all by means of anything wonderful to be read in any book, or heard in any lecture, or proposed on the platform of any Convention. It will be, if at all, by looking clearly at your little service under the same old familiar daylight of common sense that guides you on all other right lines, and by taking it up with the same reasonable and patient and homespun principles that you take with you when you go about any undertaking—where you want very much to succeed.

Here, for instance, close by you, in your own village or city, are a thousand women—say young women—with not much to do, mostly of one class, and that the class to which you belong; you meet some of them in society, call on them and receive them, talk with them on a variety of topics, notice their manner of living and pass upon it, I hope, no sharp personal judgment. They are perhaps your house-mates, your relatives, your friends. When these persons hear anything said on Sunday at church about Church work, there flits cas-

ually across their minds—and vanishes—an unreal, indistinct image. It is formless, colorless, with a hazy outline, no filling-in of living figures or warm tints. They have themselves no part in it, no concern for it, no notion of it. It comes in among the notices given out before the sermon, not to be thought of again till it is repeated in the same place. It is like the Thirty-nine Articles in the Prayer Book; it belongs there no doubt, but it lies off in another sphere; their clergyman knows about it; and they remember a few acquaintances supposed to be of an abnormal temperament who attend to such things as an idiosyncrasy. If they are asked to give something at the offertory for an orphan-house, or a hospital, or a city mission, there is a transient vision of a tidy room somewhere, with closets and shelves full of pretty garments for children and folded pillow-cases, watched over by a sister with a white cap and cross—this picture having no possible relation to any actual aching flesh or poisoned blood, or quivering nerves or hungry mouths. It is

only the illustrated page of a romantic fiction—the curiosity-box of a sacred museum. You understand perfectly well that this is all that these women close by you, made just as you are made, know or care to know about Church work. With some of them the whole circle of Christian responsibility is bounded by the walls of their houses. Some of them are intellectual, but intellectually selfish, and they seek literary or artistic luxury as epicures seek game and wine. Some of them are simply frivolous, but selfishly frivolous, living for some periodical stimulus of the nervous tissue, with ghastly intervals of restless discontent for the moving pageant of the streets or the play, the jewelry, the flattery. Many of them are living as they were brought up to live, and are not much more to be condemned than the debased girls of Circassia. Their nearest approach to the life of Christ on the earth is a repetition of the Creed with a graceful obeisance at His Blessed Name, and the saying of some prayers, with as much meaning left in

them as there is sweetness in the rose laid last summer in the leaves of the Prayer Book. These women are not here with you; they never are; but you know them. Would it be strange if your Lord and theirs, were He to come among us here this morning, should inquire of you concerning them? They have never crossed over from their world, where every season they are less sincere, less generous, less pure (I was going to say less happy, but of what sort of consequence will it be to them before the Throne of Judgment whether they were happy or not?) they have never crossed over to this other world where *you* come to think about your Christian work and ask for strength and grace to do it more thoroughly than you ever have hitherto. But is it certain that none of them can be brought over? Are you sure that, among those special faculties and gifts which God lent you when He made you a woman, there is none that was meant to be used for just that purpose? Are you sure that among those poverty-stricken hearts, those

affluent paupers, those perfectly-dressed slaves of a despotic society, there may not be one to whom God has entrusted you with an errand and a message? You converse on many subjects; you study more or less the art of talking; might you not so apply it that somebody should learn from you that this other world of charity exists and has attractions; of care for the poor, of thought for women in Asia and Africa brutalized, of sewing garments for orphans, of nursing the sick who have neither medicine nor a bed, nothing to palliate pain or ease a cough or rest the back; of sending a cordial or a slice to some overtaxed and forsaken wife wasting under what a brilliant Frenchwoman calls "the august martyrdom of maternity"? In other words, are we to go on in the narrow prejudice that all hunger and nakedness and misery are physical and material—that the only people needing the gifts of Christian mercy are on the squalid margins or at the dregs of society—outcasts, negroes, Indians, the fatherless, the diseased; that we have no moral India

or China among the opulent or refined; that there is no Church work to be done in your own class: that it is not just as good service to the Master to bring a new worker into His vineyard as to lift up the lost? May not this be your *thorough work*? Some of you have an apostleship to intelligence and property. Because you are a woman, you fulfil that ministry better than men, and in some respects better than clergymen, for God has given you delicacy of perception, tact, and the power which goes with the art of pleasing.

It will be said this mission to the rich is a hard work; it is taking up the cross. To that we only answer, Is it possible that any woman really in earnest has imagined that she could follow Christ, do His work and know His will, without taking up a cross? Have you looked for a kind of service to Him and His people which costs nothing, or nothing but money, or the work of the hand? We are inquiring about Thoroughness, and the work that is thorough is that which is done where it is needed most.

The most natural division that can be made of church workers makes two classes:—1, those who propose to separate themselves entirely from domestic life, or any ordinary occupation, giving their whole time to some kind of charity and devotion, and 2, those who continue to live in what we may call the normal relations, *i. e.*, as members of families, or boarders perhaps, having their own private pursuits or household employments, yet appropriating a part of their time and attention—some more and some less—to these charitable and religious interests. The distinction is obvious enough; but in the difficulties encountered, and in the discipline required, it turns out to be in practice even a wider distinction than might be expected.

First of all it is to be clearly understood that, as to merit, or honor, or credit, there is between these two classes no distinction whatever, no preference, no superiority of the one over the other. As before God, infinitely Holy, the Searcher of hearts, we know nothing of any deserving or degrees

of deserving. We only know that all alike, one with another, looking up to the Great Throne of Judgment, we can claim nothing but compassion, forbearance and pardon. There have been times and communities where both women and men who have segregated themselves from common society to follow a life exclusively confined to prayer and alms deeds were venerated as the favorites of Heaven; they were set into a place of peculiar exaltation. In the feeling and the literature of those periods or schools of Christian thought this estimate of the members of Christian orders, generally taking the three vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, was well-nigh universal. It tinged Christianity itself with a distinctive hue. In the reaction, as generally happens, Protestant opinion has swung with a corresponding excess the other way. Either one-sidedness is now without excuse and dishonorable. Among both sisterhoods and brotherhoods some members are always found to be singularly pure, self-denying and sweet-hearted, singularly Christlike.

Others are found to be censorious, conceited, petulant, insubordinate, or of base imaginations. So outside of these orders, and all around us, there are those who from year to year and to the end of their lives make themselves poor, lonely, single, and take the lowest places. They do it individually, for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake, to follow Christ, to help and bless the needy. The sense of duty and of God's favor holds them up under the Cross. And then there are a vast number, we all know, everywhere, self-seeking, self-indulgent, self-willed. So there is no clean-cut line of division. There can be none. On both sides, in the "waves of this troublesome world," the net gathers of every kind. The state of virginity is a blessed state—sometimes. Sometimes it is not blessed. It is blessed when it is either voluntarily adopted or cheerfully accepted because it seems to be the will of God—never blessed otherwise. Our Lord Himself—see St. Matthew, xix.—gave His heavenly benediction to those who choose to go unmarried, be-

cause in the conditions where they are placed they can so better serve Him and serve His people, and He implied that they would always be comparatively few. He also gave His heavenly benediction to marriage, and guarded its sanctity with awful securities. Every well-taught Christian must revere and commemorate the Blessed Virgin Mary—but must remember also that she was a mother. Christ chose to the highest seats of authority in His Church—apostleship—married men, and apparently single men too. St. Paul preferred celibacy, gave his reasons, and saw the need of it in the terrible trials of the ministry in his missionary experience; and he as plainly uttered and repeated the instruction that every relationship of the family was after God's ordinance, and that family-life, resting upon wedlock, is as evidently inherent in the kingdom of grace as of nature. He frames out of the union and love of the bridegroom and bride that image and symbol of the mystical union of Christ and His Body, the Church, which is sacredly significant, and

if it were taken away the loss would rob both inspired and uninspired language of one of its most perfect and luminous illustrations.

It comes to this then: the Church Catholic has ample room for all her children, and all her servants. If we must think about comparative degrees of holiness—which is not very profitable—we must consider always two things,—the amount of real, personal sacrifice, and the motive of that sacrifice. Virtue is not in conditions, orders, institutions, offices, vocations: it is in human hearts and daily lives. There are women to whom it would be a sacrifice to marry; the care of a household would be a burden; a husband would be a cross; constitution and temperament do not incline that way: and if they go into a religious house because they like it, why call them saints? In uncounted houses at this moment, there are wives, there are daughters, there are sisters, and servants too, whom Christ calls every day to meet difficulties, to endure provocations, to go through manual drudg-

ery, nursings, watchings, and even fastings, to encounter agonies of the spirit and weariness of the body, not surpassed certainly in any sisterhood, religious house, orphanage, or hospital. How false to deny to these women, if they hear that voice of Christ and follow it, the praise bestowed on the recluse, or the nun? How unfair and how absurd to pretend that there is not just as much *thoroughness* in women's work here as there,—in the "religious" house and in the common houses which faith and duties *make* religious, alike!

In two ways, very commonly nowadays, and in two unlike quarters, the separated women, the communities, the "religious" technically so-called, are misjudged. They are denounced, and they are envied. I shall take it for granted that there is no one in this audience so much in the dark as not to know that there were deaconesses in the primitive Church, appointed and approved by the Apostles of our Lord; that from that time on, without ceasing, to this day, great numbers of merciful and holy women have

been specially set apart and employed, under regulations, with much variety of rules, by the ecclesiastical and episcopal authority; and that from an early period they took vows or made solemn public promises,—either temporary or perpetual. There are now probably several hundred such persons in several dioceses in the United States, and a thousand or more in England. The number is slowly increasing. Some of their methods and features are possibly unwise, and if they are so they are likely to be mended. But there are few, if any, gross abuses. What it seems to me those of you who are not of them ought to consider is that the laws of female character are all the time just as much at work in all these women, under their special and exceptional conditions, as in society at large; that in some shape or other the same temptations, dangers, weaknesses, trials, foibles and sins, which beset other women, beset them; and that if they and you are to be saved, they and you must be saved by the power of the same grace, of the same Saviour, applied to

the personal conscience and heart through the same means,—prayer, discipline, Scripture and sacraments.

Looking on one of these establishments from without you would say it must be an abode of unbroken quiet, without vexation, without collisions, with few if any social bewilderments, perhaps of terrible and depressing monotony. In point of fact it is a theatre of the universal, world-wide, never-ending, never-resting struggle of humanity with itself and its environments—with only these variations, that there are a few peculiar exposures and a few unusual helps. Isolation in itself beyond a certain point is a peril, as it was among the Oriental cœnobites and in some, not all, of the Western monasteries, because it leaves some of the original faculties unused or dwarfed. Put six or forty or a hundred women close together under one roof, women who have no natural ties, no personal affinities, no softening influence of kindred, not choosing one another, but pushed against each other in inevitable details, and, no matter how ex-

cellent the rules or skilful the policy, be sure the superior, mother, prioress, or the Bishop who undertakes the management, will have bruises of the spirit and many an hour of despair. Patience finds a grand opportunity to have her perfect work. All the mutual duties, the menial tasks, in spite of envyings and jealousies, and a sense of unfair inequality, have to be gone through without the attracting force of personal love or taste—nothing but sheer obedience. This is hard. These women must be like-hearted if they can, without being like-minded. In some cases, too, there is more provision made for duties Godward than duties womanward, for the religious life than the moral life. It is as if a wall were built up between the two tables of the Law, or between the first and second of Christ's two commandments. Certain social vices and their solicitations are shut out, to be sure—luxury, covetousness, misuse of time, sensuous amusements and spectacles, the extravagances and prodigality of dress. But the Tempter himself is by no means shut

out, and, being there on his own business, with all his wits about him, he only shifts his tactics, even to clothing himself like an angel. There is no fashion of a class or garb, no routine or bell, no crucifix or veil, that can bar the gateway of the thoughts, or by itself sanctify the soul. The work cannot be a *thorough work* till the springs of life are cleansed, and the silent, in-wrought structure of character is built on that one only Foundation other than which no man or woman can lay.

We come to see more and more, as I thought you might agree with me when I said it at the outset, that our failures and our shortcomings in every line come from one and the same cause, and that we are to remedy them by a few simple principles, the same for you who divide and proportion your work between duties at home and in society and in the charities of churches where you worship, as for those who are set apart and consecrated by a ceremony. Most of you to whom I am speaking are of the former class. You want and you try to

introduce into your mixed and not altogether satisfactory way of living a higher and better element. Your standard is nobler than your performance. As the day and night go, you each see, being taught as a Christian, having been baptized under three tremendous pledges, going to church, saying "I believe," knowing that you are coming to Judgment, you see that you are taking too much of every week of your life and giving it to what makes somehow for yourself, too little for those poorer, weaker, unhappier, less taught than you are, in some part of the world. About this you are not altogether at ease. In two respects you are quite sure you might do better. You might be less selfish, and so do more; you might take more pains and thought, and so be more *thorough*. As to the first, get it more and more into your minds not only how large the mass of misery and iniquity about you is, but that it is within your reach, and that God put you into the world with an express purpose of His will that you should do something, do your part, woman as you

are, however diffident, shy, inexperienced, busy or indolent—something to lighten the misery, to sweeten the bitterness, to purify the sin. That is your own express, inalienable work. You must do it or you are meanly selfish, and God will punish you as you deserve. Think it over. When your Rector gives out the notices in the church, attend to them, and, if you don't know what they mean, inquire. When you hear the name of some merciful society, ask some one to bring you a report or statement of it and read it through. Ask some trusted acquaintance what charity she works for or gives to; if it startles her, no matter. We might as well startle or be startled as go to sleep and be those of whom the Bible says that their "damnation slumbereth not." When you are disgusted at the horrors in the newspapers, ask yourself whether you have done and said what you could to make such iniquities and crimes impossible. Take a walk with your brother or husband where you will see poverty and degradation in the street. Take the *Spirit of Missions*. Go

through some hospital or orphanage. Perhaps you had better begin indoors. Sister Dora, when she was forty-one years of age, was asked for her opinion on woman's work. Her answer was plain as it is suggestive: "I feel pretty much like Balaam of old, as if I should give quite the contrary advice to what you wanted of me. You would like me to urge women to work in hospitals, and all that. I feel more inclined to harangue about women doing their work at home, being the helpmeet for man which God ordained." Without joining any "order" there is a sense in which your enthusiasm can be kindled by the simple vow of the old Hospitallers, to be all their lives servants to some one sick or poor, so far as in them lay, to do and to give for the love of Christ.

Now suppose your interest has been aroused. More obstacles than you could foresee, and more than you can count now you do see them, spring up to hinder you. Nobody in the house or out of it encourages you. Some one sneers. When the time

comes to go out, or to take up charity sewing, or attend the society meeting, or take your turn in reading to the sick woman or the crippled child, there is something pleasant before you that you like better. There is a cloud, or bad walking. Satan knows your weak side. You would take hold of the parish charities if you were "recognized," if you were not afraid no one that you like would speak to you, or some one that you don't like would, if you were put into office, if you were not treated uncivilly, if things were managed to suit you, if the Rector had called and asked you personally, if Mrs. A. or Mrs. B., one of your "set," went or worked, if you knew just how to dress, if you understood the object, if you could see any sense in an "Auxiliary," if you "believed in foreign missions," if you thought it ever worth while to send money out of the parish instead of keeping it at home to pay parish expenses; in other words, you would be benevolent if it cost nothing; you would be a good Samaritan if you could do it by passing by on the other

side; you would give something away if you could give it away without taking it from yourself; you would take up the Cross if you could take it up without making a sacrifice; you would be charitable if you could be charitable and self-indulgent at the same time. Who of us does not see that the practical and prevailing hindrances to the Church work of women are precisely those faults—of will, of heart, of temper, of indolence and pride, of Christian character, of imperfect discipleship to Christ, which beset us and shame us and put us in peril of perdition everywhere? They are the very sins which, as He plainly forewarns, must separate between Him and the guilty soul.

Indirectly, the way to get lifted up out of these poor disgraces of cowardice and faithlessness is to lay hold of outward support. To furnish that very support is one of the purposes of combination, of the social principle, of the Auxiliary, the special circle that seeks to help the negro, the Indian, the pagan of a particular country, the degraded woman in Burmah or Utah, the Red Cross

League or the City Mission. System, intelligence, information, regular appointments, working hours—occasions like this—they are so many hands that uphold and guide. But *directly* there must be the summoning up of a Christian will. The life of guilty indifference to all the wants and sufferings of mankind outside the petty circle of their own interests and enjoyments, which is lived by many women in every social class, is a stigma on your sex, and by lowering yours it lowers necessarily the other. It grows into a debasing tyranny of self-love.

Thoroughness in woman's work means something far more than fine sewing, the due finish of a garment, or the tidy filling up of a box of comforts and clothing for a missionary family on the frontier, or punctuality at a meeting, though these also are included; these ought ye to have done and not to leave another and more comprehensive thing undone. Thoroughness in any work is the work that goes *thorough* in the old English, or through and through the mind and spirit of the doer of it, as well as the

performance or workmanship turned out. Many detailed errands or heartless manual tasks of charity may be performed, but hast thou "delivered thy soul"? We never come into the true upper air of a life generous as the Son of Man was generous till we come to regard hardships as privileges and labor as delight, because "life" is joy and "no man liveth to himself." It has been well said that "in hours of clear reason we should never say that we had made a sacrifice;" and again, it may be said that "all in our lives which we are most glad to recall is sacrificial." For "sacrifice" describes, in its true sense, not love to man so much as devotion to God; not suffering, but dedication; not the foregoing of that which we might have enjoyed, but the conversion of that which was offered to us for a time into an actual possession; the investment of things unstable and fleeting, though painful, with a power of unchangeable joy. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto Me." Done what? The very things which

you Church workers are seeking to do, and to do better and better. Hunger, thirst of body or spirit, strangerhood, nakedness, sickness, some kind of bondage or danger or distress, these are your opportunities. "Unto Me." That is the motive. It is by keeping nearer to Christ, and so having Him nearer to you, more in your thoughts, more in your hearts, that you grow and strengthen into real *thoroughness*. Whatever your other relationships, He says, you then become to Him "sister" or "mother." Whether you minister to heathen far off or to sufferers near your door, the Christlikeness must come out. It is told of Dannecker, the German sculptor, that he worked eight years upon his statue of Christ. At the end of two years he called a little girl into his studio, and, pointing to the figure, asked, "Who is that?" The child replied, "Some great person." The artist turned away disheartened. "I have failed," he said; "I must begin anew." After two years of patient labor, he again brought the same child before the statue.

“Who is it now?” After a long, silent gaze, she bowed her head in adoration and answered, “It is He who said, Suffer the little children to come unto Me.” Then Dannecker knew that his work was thorough.

For this you will need a higher tone of personal spiritual life—a “life unspotted from the world.” The Godward life must be first; then out of that the charitable life, in the divine order. This your Lord will accept. “This woman hath not ceased to kiss My feet.” “Ye did it unto Me.”

Then the hand of God will be mighty upon us in blessing. Then your work will abide, whatever else passes away.

VI.

SPIRITUAL HELPS AND FAILURES IN KEEPING
THE ROYAL LAW.

VI.

SPIRITUAL HELPS AND FAILURES IN KEEPING THE ROYAL LAW.

WE have met in a common understanding that our object now is not information, or criticism of the past, or the proposal of any specific plan that is new. Lines of charitable work for women, as well as for men, are now at last—praise be to God!—well marked out by the Church. Others still, in greater number and variety, will disclose themselves in a providential order, to eyes that watch for them, and hands that are ready for them, as we go on. You are here thankful for what you have been permitted to do, to inquire together how to supply in yourselves, with fresh power and fulness, that living and life-giving spirit out of which all holy activity must come; how to keep the true proportion, in honor to the Master, between the life of Christian labor abroad in the world and the life of loving

devotion in the personal soul. This question takes us at once behind all matters of detail, the mere methods of organization and administration, to the primitive principles of the kingdom of Christ. Throughout the universe of God, in things spiritual no less than in things material, life is not only "more than meat" as "the body is more than raiment," but life is more than all its own forms and organs of visible operation. And "he that *hath the Son* hath life"—he or she only, always, and everywhere, first by the baptism of water and the Holy Ghost, and then by that ever-springing faith and ever-living personal communion which holds the channel always open between the Heart of the Lord and the heart of every believing and loving work-woman in the world.

Suppose, my friends, you stop your busy doing a little while, in visiting the poor, attending "circles" and societies, making garments, going to the county houses, and draw off from it a little way, just long enough and far enough to ask yourselves,

What is it all for? What motive propels it? What spirit underlies it? What is the real end you are seeking? In a general way one might answer, "Oh! our object is to do good." But generalities are not always enough. Sometimes they hide from us what it is most important for us to remember and to feel. "To do good"—yes, but what kind of good? "Good" in whose name, good by whose constant help, good for whose honor? Is there any actual "good" in these sacred undertakings which does not spring directly from Him who is Head over all things to His Church, or which is not pursued with a conscious communion of each personal soul with Him, or where this passion for His glory does not run through all the particulars of the service, sustaining and elevating, vitalizing and sanctifying, the whole character of that Christian woman by whom the service is performed?

No doubt, if we regarded nothing more than the external and visible objects accomplished by all these diversified labors, there

would still be a great deal here to challenge the admiration of the world. You can so report them, in figures and statistics, that they present a handsome and honorable array to the eye of Christian calculation. But is there not a finer and higher criterion than this by which to measure—or rather to weigh—the absolute worth of woman's work in the Church? Are you quite satisfied with that: so many dollars gathered and expended and counted; so many boxes filled and despatched; so many missionaries and their families (and not so very many, after all) fed and clothed; so many hours of needlework; so many patients tended, visits made, letters written, publications distributed, meetings held? I venture to invite you here to a loftier view of your blessed calling, and a more heavenly computation of its returns. I point you to a harvest invisible, slowly reaped with pain and penitence, with self-dissatisfaction, with heart-weariness and tears because you have come so far short of your aim; but a harvest immortal as the character where it is garnered

up, and abiding as the image of Christ, formed within, who is your "exceeding great reward"—treasure laid up against the day of His second "appearing."

Let me pay you the tribute of respect to believe that nothing less than this will content the aspirations of you who are met here before me: I mean the aim to join all your special performances with a large, deep, personal, spiritual culture; and to reckon no action, however beneficial to society or to any fellow-creature, as touched with its divinest charm, unless it is done as a dutiful and joyous free-will offering to Him for whom nothing can be too much, nothing can be counted hard; who loved us before we loved Him, and whom truly to know is life eternal.

I shall try to help you by speaking first frankly of dangers, and then more gladly of helps and encouragements. Place as the first of your dangers that of falling into a careless repetition of whatever benevolent tasks you have set yourself, as if they were only a piece of reputable or laudable

routine; the danger of forgetting from day to day, Him who said, "Daughter, be of good cheer, thy faith hath saved thee;" the danger of losing sight of that Heavenly Face looking down upon you, which makes the homeliest drudgery it shines on beautiful and divine; the danger of dulling the keen perception by which the spiritual meaning is discerned under ordinary lawful employments, and the wine of Christian joy is tasted, out of the Jewish water-pots of stone. It is a temptation that besets the holiest offices.

Is there not a possibility that, amid all these fair-seeming and much-praised alms-deeds, with their pious garniture, your tone may gradually degenerate, till, in the absorption of mental attention, the irritation at obstacles, the perfunctory exercises, the worry and fret of care, the absence of self-examination, the unchanged worldly temper, it may prove that, notable and stirring disciple though you are, you are little better, after all, than one of the bondwomen of the world? Beware, then, of the be-

numbing effects of unfelt sanctities and charities. In its various degrees this apathy renders us superficial in religion, automations in duty, unequal to great sacrifices, stupid in our discriminations between right and wrong, wanting in vigorous condemnations of sin, as well as in clear recognitions of high states and graces; it produces religious mediocrity. We are thinking all the while of the outside performance and its instruments, not of the original springs whence the organs derive their living force. We are not looking "unto the hills," but bustling and peeping about in the petty workshop of our ecclesiastical or philanthropic machinery. The mortal elements of the business encroach on those that are superhuman, and more and more they vulgarize the august mystery of "walking humbly with God," under the "powers of the world to come," and thus they hide His Glory. Ask yourself, then, not only, "What am I *doing*?" but "*What am I, in doing it, and what am I becoming?*" What is the real life underneath all my work?

Uncover my heart, O my God, and show me to myself! Am I ready to take up—dare I—with all its awful signification, David's cry in the 139th Psalm: 'Try me, O God, and seek the ground of my heart, prove me, and examine my thoughts'? I will at least entreat, with the 51st—'Make me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me. Oh, give me the comfort of Thy help again, and stablish me with Thy free Spirit.' Then—not till then—then, when I have been so searched, cleansed, renewed, and empowered from on High, shall my work be clothed with its true and rightful honor and crowned with its lawful fruit; then 'shall I teach Thy ways unto the wicked,' while I feed and clothe them, and the 'sinners' I visit and comfort 'shall be converted unto Thee!'"

A second danger to the Christian work of women is self-will. I point it out with reliance on your candid and patient judgment. It is undeniably true that those who

have attempted to organize and carry on holy labors by Christian women, whether Bishops, Rectors, or others—have been, over and over, thwarted, disappointed, and saddened by this obstinate difficulty—a reluctance of those who are set about the work to work under direction. The difficulty is aggravated, probably, in this country, by the prevalent habit of self-guidance in social, domestic, and political lines of life, in manners, in religion, in all sorts of beliefs and preferences. Our institutions being democratic, and the doctrine of self-help and self-reliance being conspicuous in our rationalistic and transcendental philosophy, deference to authority being construed into a mark of mental servility, and the schools, to say nothing of parents, educating all children to think and act for themselves—in short, discipline, in all pursuits, being made of less account than enterprise and energy, how can we wonder, the national air being so charged with the spirit of independence, that our young people should drink it in, and so grow up self-con-

fidant, at least, if not insubordinate? Where every boy is told to be his own master, why should not every girl be expected to be her own mistress? We may imagine that among churchwomen the popular notion of "women's rights" will be held in check; and in its extreme, coarse form it certainly is. But if we consider that "rights" are always in a certain relation to *duties*, and then inquire which of these is most likely to get the start and come uppermost, we shall be apt to see that we have still a great deal left to do in learning how to be led. One thing is certain; institutions of any sort cannot be managed by a mob. Many minds cannot act together without rule. Complicated interests clash and collapse except for law. Even a parish sewing-school comes to be a jangle and a misery where a few ambitious persons import the competitions and pushings of secular society into the sallies of philanthropy. It is worse when the members of a sisterhood, the inmates of a deaconess-house, the nurses in a hospital, the associ-

ates in a Church school or mission, allow themselves in the childish fallacy that the main point with each one is to see that her own province is not invaded, that authority is equalized, that privileges and dignities are leveled, and, in short, that to the farthest extreme possible she has her own way. Make it a principle, as soon as you enter on any good effort with other women, to set bravely aside a good large share of your own likings, pet theories, whims, and the whole stock of your prejudices. You are all well aware how plausible the pretext is that the insubordinate course is a matter of conscience, and that the stand taken is in obedience to a "higher law." So we are apt to confound ourselves with our cause, having first adroitly convinced ourselves that the cause which we have espoused is God's cause, as against all the other causes of our neighbors or our house-mates. The fact is that the will and the conscience live very near to each other in the natures of many men and many women, and the one is easily mistaken for the other. You have

heard of the troublesome Scotchman who, being asked what conscience is, said, "It is something in me that says, 'I wont!'" There are not a few well-meaning Church workers of both sexes who estimate their fidelity to duty chiefly by this negative scale —*i. e.*, by the degree to which they are in opposition. They take crotchets for principles. Wait awhile, when you get into conflict with those set over you, and from day to day and hour to hour ask yourself, "How much of this determined zeal of mine is for Christ and how much for myself?" There was once, two hundred years ago, in France, a large house of consecrated people dwelling together for a united life of charity and prayer, where various religious interests were represented under a very wise and apostolic head. Three members of this sacred community fell out with one another. It was a quarrel of precedence, a dispute for official rank, and had to be referred to the presiding mind, the expectation being that he would of course assign the coveted post to one or

another of the three contestants. To their wholesome surprise he told them, after deliberation, that they had all alike proved themselves unfit for advancement by this self-seeking contention; that the proof was clear that they had made too little progress in the school of Christ, and that only they who are content to take the lowest place in that school can be bidden to "go up higher"; and then he sent them all back to spend a week in private devotion to the humiliations of Jesus, beseeching Him to grant them a better mind.

They who are not equal to respect for this law had better not push forward into a specially holy and cross-bearing vocation. You say it is hard. Yes, it is hard; but who made it hard? Not the love of God, but our own self-love. And was it not laid down at the beginning, among the original principles of this kingdom and this life, that it should be hard? "Except you take up the cross." There it is. Undoubtedly it is hard—this self-surrender, with all its particulars of crucifixion, the contradiction of

sinner, the fruitless endeavor, the disturbance of comfort, the torture of sensibility, the unappreciated struggle, the contemptuous look or speech of a superior, the indifferent rector, the overcautious bishop, the ingratitude of the pauper, the dirt and disorder, the foul odor and disgusting appetite, the unseasonable interruption, the impatience, the "cross" laid not only on the leisure-liking body, but on the finer tastes, the affections, the intellect, the literary indulgence—it is hard. The solitude with no sympathy, or the strife of tongues with no "pavilion" to hide in, and, finally, the unruliness of your own tongue! Oh! the poison and the dagger and the fire of the tongue, in all these labors of the Lord! The critical tongue, the censorious tongue, the backbiting, and stinging, and estranging tongue, trailing the mischief of the serpent over all hallowed places and pretensions! But then, again, the peace and the strength and the glory, too, of those who are found meet and equal to the battle! conquerors, and more than conquerors

through Him that hath loved them! There are not many sweeter satisfactions than those that spring up as the aftermath of magnanimity and self-sacrifice. May He give you, dear friends, such grace—He, the magnanimous and most gracious Christ—so that out of your sore battles with self, self-indulgence, self-pleasing, self-praise, self-will, and from among the broken pillars of your pride there may rise up and grow—yielding both flower and fruit—“that most excellent gift” of the Lord’s charity, the encircling vine which is the very bond of peace and of all virtues, without which whosoever liveth is counted dead!

If there were space, something might be said of the danger of attaching to your religious services the idea of personal merit. Probably some of those who consecrate their lives specially, if their hearts were laid quite bare would be seen to feel a little of that complacency in it which is nothing in the world but a modified form of the sin of the Pharisee, and which brought from the

merciful lips of our Lord the sharpest rebukes He ever uttered. That subtle legalism is no more Hebrew than American. Workers may be proud of their "work," as fanatics are of their "faith." Still more likely is it that some of those women who divide their time between philanthropy and fashion, or intersperse a gay and ambitious social career with occasional acts of liberality and a regular attendance at relief meetings, or take their turns at an employment society, if they were to speak out just what is in their hearts would say apologetically, "Oh, yes, to be sure, my life is rather worldly; let me, then, throw into it a little of this redeeming element of Church work!" Redeeming? They forget that redeeming is, to the Christian, something altogether beyond all that we do; and that no Church work, even to the bestowing of all our goods or time to feed the poor, any more than the Church itself, can take the Redeemer's place. The best use of any part of us cannot be substituted for the sanctifying of the whole heart in us; and

that only is the accepted gift which is not purchase-money for salvation, but a thank-offering to the Saviour. What matter if it empties us of ourselves, humiliates our vanity, and makes us ashamed of our weakness? One greater than you and me gloried in that "weakness," because in it Christ's strength was made manifest. Henceforth he *takes pleasure* "in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake." The spiritual law is that when we are least sufficing to ourselves we are ready to admit Him, whom otherwise, being self-satisfied, we should never seek or welcome. Mrs. Browning, in her "Vision of Poets," has a striking paraphrase:

" I am content to be so bare
Before the archers, everywhere
My wounds being stroked with heavenly air.
' I know,' is all the sufferer saith,
' Knowledge by suffering entereth,
And life is perfected by death.'"

It is time to name, now, two or three of the chief helps by which these adverse influences, besetting the highest and purest

of callings, may be resisted, and the soul be kept single in its aim, true to its vows, and near to Him who calls us and who goes before us.

It seems to me that among these you should set foremost *seasons of seclusion*, carefully provided for and systematically guarded in your regular plan of living. Our blessed Master Himself was as often alone as in the temple; and certainly the power of His night-hours in the Mount is felt in His works among human dwellings and in His preaching by the wayside. Among the Apostles, to what an inferior level should we reduce their whole history and utterance if we struck away the traces of their frequent retreats into solitude, where they continued instant in prayer! Is it not remarkable, too, in the biography of great characters outside the Scriptural history, how uniformly they have, for some period of their lives, been held apart from their kind? Much intercourse with people tends, no doubt, to make us ready and broad in sympathy; but, if it is perpetual, it tends also

to make us superficial and thin in faith; and this, you know well, is the tendency of the times we are living in. It was in mercy that Christ took pains to draw the disciples aside: "Come ye apart and rest a while." Deserts and silences appear to have been regarded as a positive requirement in the economy of mediation. I believe it is quite impossible to maintain the religious life at its highest pitch or healthiest pulse without such a frequent sequestration as shuts off the intrusion of people, leaving an unobstructed access to the soul for the Holy Spirit. No doubt, much is to be religiously gained from intercourse with others; and most especially with the poor in their homes. If you would know how much, and how splendidly this mingling with the lowly, the illiterate, and the weak may illuminate a career otherwise ordinary, you find it set forth with uncommon beauty and power in that book which English and American women have lately read with tears in their eyes—the Biography of Sister Dora. They must visit the poor, it strikes

me, with a very shallow mind who do not *gather from them* quite as much as they impart to them, bearing it away for their own warning, or comfort, or thanksgiving. All human lives that touch one another at all color and shape one another. When we see, in our visits, the sufferings wrought by sin, it would be shameful if our own sins were not reprov'd and made hateful. And so it would be a terrible loss if each instance of saintly goodness or domestic magnanimity that we meet there did not revive our own flagging virtue, or quicken us a little in our inglorious and halting way. Nothing of this kind, however, will happen, unless by voluntary and responsible attention we turn what Providence shows us of the workings of His hand in these neighbor-lives into testimonies and commandments and promises for *ourselves*; unless we cry with all our might, "Show Thou me," by these side-lights about my path, "the way that I should walk in, for I lift up my soul unto Thee."

It will remain true, after all, beyond any

doubt, that the two principal instruments for keeping us religiously equal to the demands of our active work are those which all the great teachers in holy things since the days of the fathers, all the deepest readers of the human heart, all the masters and doctors in the mysteries of the kingdom, and all the profoundest and most practical writers of devotional books, patristic and mystical, Roman and Protestant alike, have set foremost—viz, meditation and prayer.¹

Of these two, in our modern habit, and perhaps everywhere, unless it may have been in the extraordinary monastic or conventual discipline, meditation has held the secondary place. It is the more difficult—to do well, at least. It has not, as prayer has, the stimulus of a petition for something of which we feel the want. It has not the same helps of prepared forms of words. It exacts more self-command in controlling and concentrating the mind. Yet you all feel it to be a duty. I suggest then four

¹ Some sentences in what follows have occurred in a former part of this volume.

simple rules: 1. That one would best begin the practice by taking, to think of, some distinct theme, like a grace of character, an attribute of God, a quality of Christ's life on earth, or one of His offices to the soul, or a feature of the heavenly blessedness, or the phases and devices of some special temptation. 2. That a *time* should be chosen when the mind is least absorbed by some pressing interest or distracting anxiety. 3. That, while a perusal of prepared meditations should not be allowed to become a substitute for our own, we should not refuse to aid a wandering or sluggish mood by short readings in such authors as we find most nutritious or luminous; and 4, that we never hamper or confine the exercise of meditation by a too rigid adherence to a method, or render it dry. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."

Of prayer I speak finally, and here but briefly because of the richness and fulness and accessibleness of devout classics in the literature of the Church. It will be enough for the present if in a very few sentences I

record, without argument or illustration, a kind of summary of what I have found out by use, rather than by any external authority, of the laws of secret devotion. 1. The grand argument for prayer is praying. Almost any amount of reasoning, without the practice, comes short of the aim. Like Professor Tyndall's notorious prayer-test, ratiocination takes the hearer out of the whole sphere of the matter treated into one where it can neither be analyzed nor apprehended. 2. You will be more likely to induce a non-praying person to pray by waking up wants in him, which he feels no man can satisfy, than by either precept or example; and far more likely to confirm and establish him in the practice by persuading him to try the experiment for himself than by any directory or regulation. 3. There are times when the spirit *wants* to be alone and to dwell on things divine. Take advantage of those times; indulge the heavenly impulse; put your common things aside; you will lose nothing in the end, and you will gain for that life which has no end.

Almost everybody prays; even infidels pray when they come to a point of danger or distress so fearful that they can do nothing of themselves. All doubts vanish then. What can this mean? It can only mean God's purpose and goodness—"I will, therefore, that men pray everywhere." Private prayers, or the prayers of personal religion, cannot well be too specific. We fail there oftenest by generality. 4. It may be a paradox to the understanding, but it is not so to faith, that we should always expect answers, and yet never be disappointed to despair if we do not get them; what a real answer to prayer is being beyond our knowledge. If we believe and trust at all, we must believe and trust through and through. 5. If we do not, at any time, relish praying, or find it a reality, it may be a reason why indirect measures should be taken to restore spiritual health, but not a reason for omitting the duty altogether. It is well to have a secret personal liturgy, admitting of more or less variation, to be used daily, whatever the mood, or occupation,

or circumstances may be, and with this as a *minimum* to leave room for what is most spontaneous, occasional, or familiar, the two principles of order and freedom running through the spritual life as well as through the spiritual world. 6. Except supplication for ourselves is attended by much intercession, by thanksgiving and praise, prayer is too much sunk in self-interest, and yields but a partial blessing. 7. And, finally, nothing that is of weight enough for a Christian man's thoughts or wishes is too trivial for his devotions. "Be careful for nothing; but in everything—in everything—by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God; and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds, through Christ Jesus."

Pray, then, as those who always expect to be answered, and yet will never faint if no answer *seems* to come. The sky is not brass, the earth is not iron. Pray sometimes from the sudden sense of need overtaking and overwhelming you, with swift and

short ejaculations, as you run, or teach, or toil, sending up the arrows that catch fire as they fly. Pray often after secret and ordered meditation, the preparation of self-scrutiny, and the study of the promises. Pray out of deep waters where your feet will often feel feebly after the Rock. Pray with a great deal of thanksgiving. Abound in intercessions—the especial and highest fulfilling of the “Royal Law.” Intercede particularly, one by one, for those men or those women who seem to hinder you, to tempt or thwart you, to block your way with mysterious oppositions, and so at once purge your souls of every hateful feeling, and conquer at least the one adversary who, if he reigns within, reigns with absolute and fatal dominion.

Nor will you, any of you, I am sure, ever overlook the singular comforting and unspeakable help at the altar, the supreme act of all Christian worship and adoration, where, feeding on Christ in the heart by faith, taking the pledges of His sacrifice in our very hands, eating and drinking, our

sinful bodies made clean by His Body, and our souls washed through His most precious Blood, we dwell in Him, and He in us—all the company of heaven drawing near.

We have come at last to the Source of all power and peace. As all our failure and misery come of weakness, so what we need is power. Where shall we find it? Tell us that, and you tell us all. Whence shall it come? The eagle's path hath not known it, nor the way of the sea, nor the place where the seven thunders utter their voices. It is not in ourselves; not in more learning, or experience, or new methods of study, or multiplied gestures, or pageants, or peals of music, or altered surroundings. Once for all the Lord has told us, "Come to Me; come closer; abide with Me, abide in Me." "If I went back to teach and tend my hospital patients again," Sister Dora said as she lay dying—all her wondrous, half-miraculous human strength departing—"I should dwell more than ever on the need of building all our hopes on Jesus only." One evening, when all the cabmen of the town had

promised her, at her request, to attend an evening mission-room service, and the clergyman was going to speak to them, she said to him, "Oh! speak to them to-night on this text: 'What think ye of Christ?' Make it ring in their ears!" And because it comes from Him, the Holy One, this power will be holy power. It is power to do holy things—not mere showy, or startling, or enterprising things, or clever things; not to create sensations, as the children of this world do, for all that is only an imitation of strength, and is done on the handsomest scale by the weakest kind of men and women. It is power to use all the faculties of your nature and all the opportunities of your life—at home, in society, in the Church—for sacred and spiritual ends. Power to be faithful even among the faithless; simple, in an artificial and ostentatious community; to be unfashionable when fashions do shame to the honor of Christ or the honor of woman whose body is His temple; power to be moderate where extravagance is an idol; to be sincere where du-

plicity is profitable; it is power to make loyalty to Christ and obedience to His Royal Law as firm and uncompromising as they are unpretending! You can judge whether you are growing spiritually or wasting, my friends, according as you are gaining or losing that power.

O, had we only the patience and the constancy and the fervor! Were we only worthy to add some sacrifice, some watchfulness, some kindness, every day! Then the heavenly strength of "conquerors and more than conquerors" would be storing itself up in us; then, forecasting the future, we should know what it means to say that nothing shall "ever separate us from the love of God," and these poor groanings of doubt and fear that we hear so often from one another would be still. Then our dear Church would convert more unbelievers to its Creed; and then the walls and gates of the New City which St. Augustine saw would come out more clearly on the eyes of Christian expectation, where "they cease not, faint not, and are never weary, through

all the everlasting and acceptable year of the Lord!"

We are now going away, separating, traveling on in our unknown, individual paths. "Without Me ye can do nothing." Be that the word we carry away with us, my dear friends, and keep with us in darkness and light, working together or working alone, in freshness or weariness—a word of almighty promise. Let us all say it back to Him here, this moment, with our whole hearts, and say it always to the end, "Without Thee, O Christ, we can do nothing!" And then each one may say in holy confidence, and in a power not our own, "I can do all things through Christ strengthening me."

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